The Genesis of Kubrawī Sufism: A Study of Majd al-Dīn al-Baghdādī

Eyad Abuali

Thesis Submitted for the degree of PhD

2016

Department of Near and Middle Eastern Studies

SOAS, University of London

Declaration for SOAS PhD thesis

I have read and understood regulation 17.9 of the Regulations for students of the SOAS, University of London concerning plagiarism. I undertake that all the material presented for examination is my own work and has not been written for me, in whole or in part, by any other person. I also undertake that any quotation or paraphrase from the published or unpublished work of another person has been duly acknowledged in the work which I present for examination.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Acknowledgements

This thesis would not have come to fruition without the support of Ayman Shihadeh who directed me to the text which became the subject of this study and provided me with invaluable guidance and supervision. Many have contributed to this thesis by directing me to relevant sources, providing me with feedback, and engaging with me in a variety of reading and research groups. For this I must mention George Lane, Charles Burnett, Peter Adamson, Hugh Kennedy, Liana Saif, Michael Noble, Toby Mayer, and Nur Sobers-Khan. My examiners Lloyd Ridgeon and Kazuyo Murata also provided me with valuable advice and constructive critiques.

I have been blessed with close friends during these years. They provided me with stimulating conversations and helped ease some of the more stressful moments in my research. Yakoob, Dzenita, Zahra, Farrah, Ziad, and Fatima with whom I shared many lunches, coffees and teas, provided crucial moments of joyful relief in the final stages of writing this thesis. Mehdi, Shireen, Dena, Saffi, Lubaaba, Mohammed, Nour and Zainab all contributed to this thesis in some way. From companionship while I searched for manuscripts in Istanbul, to steadfastly attending my talks and papers, helping me with Persian texts, and sharing countless memorable moments, I could rely on much selfless kindness.

I also owe my entire family an immeasurably debt for their support. I must mention my aunt Rajā' in particular who was instrumental in helping me acquire manuscript copies from Iran. I must also thank my parents Sumaya and Ali, without their love and support this thesis would not have been possible.

Abstract

This thesis focuses on the development of early Kubrawī Sufism through an analysis of the figure of Majd al-Dīn al-Baghdādī (d. 616/1219) and his major work, the *Tuḥfat al-barara.* Al-Baghdādī has not received significant scholarly attention, however his work will be shown to be invaluable for our understanding of this period in the history of Sufism. While recent studies have increasingly highlighted the importance of the transitional period in the history of Sufism in which communities transformed into orders, the early Kubrawīs have not received much attention in this regard.

This study will demonstrate that al-Baghdādī's *Tuḥfa* systematises many concepts found in Najm al-Dīn Kubrā's *Fawā'iḥ.* This theoretical framework will then be shown to inform notions of practice and belonging in discussions regarding the relationship between the Sufi master and his disciples which ultimately shape the structure of the Sufi community. From this we will have acquired the basis for investigating al-Baghdādī's work in its response to the rise of antinomian groups, as well as the changing relationship between Sufism and political rulers. The study will show that al-Baghdādī' theoretical systematisation necessitates the centralisation and stratification of the Sufi community in order to govern the structure and affiliations of the Sufi community.

This analysis will address gaps in scholarship regarding the development of Kubrawī Sufism. It will answer questions regarding the reception of previous Sufi thinkers in al-Baghdādī's work. It will also show that the development of theories of dreams and visions, which the Kubrawīs are noted for, had implications for the development of the structure of the community. Furthermore the study will offer a useful comparison with 'Umar al-Suhrawardī's institutionalisation of Sufism, revealing similarities and

divergences between the two communities, and the emergence of a self-consciously distinct Sufi community under al-Baghdādī.

This will also allow us to reassess the contribution of al-Baghdādī and his influence upon later Kubrawī thinkers such as Najm al-Dīn al-Rāzī and ‘Alā’ al-Dawla al-Simnānī who clearly rely on, and develop further, the discussions found in the *Tuḥfa.* Hence, al-Baghdādī typifies important developments in 12th and 13th century Sufism which came to shape the nature of Sufi thought and practice, elucidating the transition to Sufi orders.

Table of Contents

All References to Majd al-Dīn al-Baghdādī's *Tuḥfat al-barara fī al-masā'il al-'ashra* refer to my transcription of the manuscript: ms Istanbul, Karacelebizade 353, 2a-77a.

> And if the seeker looks to what is within him, he sees the earthly truths with their various attributes, and if he looks to what is above him he sees the heavenly things, of celestial skies and planets... And when wayfaring is supplanted by attraction, then travelling occurs in the world of the divine attributes, and this travel is without end, for the attributes of the Divine are infinite.[1]

Introduction

The 12th and 13th centuries marked an important point in the history of Sufism. This is a time when a number of pivotal Sufi thinkers and practitioners rose to prominence across the Muslim world. These include figures such as ʻUmar al-Suhrawardī (d. 632/1234), ʻAbd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī (d. 561/1166), Muʻīn al-Dīn Chishtī (d. 633/1236) and Najm al-Dīn Kubrā (d. 617/1220). Over the next few centuries these figures became synonymous with the Sufi orders named after them with the emergence of the Qādiriyya, Suhrawardiyya, Chishtiyya and Kubrawiyya. Clearly, even for medieval Muslims there was a sense that these figures represented a transition in the history of Sufism from communities which would emerge around one or more charismatic figures and disperse after their deaths, to institutions which survived for generations and usually centred around one shaykh.

These institutions came to be known as *ṭarīqas.* Prior to the age of Sufi orders, the word *ṭarīqa* referred to Sufi practice and method as a counterpart to the religious obligations of the *sharīʻa,* and a set of actions which were necessary in attaining spiritual completion, or the *ḥaqīqa.* However, as Sufism became ever more formalised, the significance of the term went beyond this tripartite scheme and came to describe the practice of Sufism itself. Before the establishment of orders, the term acquired an

[1] Al-Baghdādī, *Tuḥfat al-barara,* 7.

institutional significance and was closely associated with one's Sufi master with al-Qushayrī asserting that one who disobeys or separates from his master has broken his *ṭarīqa*.[2]

This transition to *ṭarīqa* Sufism was consolidated after the Mongol invasions of the 13th century, and hence coincides with a turbulent and violent period in the history of the Muslim world. With the establishment of orders, Sufism became an even more important social, political, cultural and religious force in medieval society. Patronage of the Sufi lodge was one of the primary ways in which political rulers gained legitimacy, while the lodge itself fulfilled important societal functions. Yet our understanding of the transition of Sufism from loosely knit communities to Sufi orders remains incomplete.

This study will attempt to account for this transition in Sufism by focusing our study on the emergence of Kubrawī Sufism. The study will be doubly useful in this regard since the first generation of Kubrawī Sufis have not been considered for their significance in the institutionalisation of Sufism. Our study will highlight the importance of understanding early Kubrawī thought in the context of this transition by focusing on the figure of Majd al-Dīn al-Baghdādī (d. 616/1219). Al-Baghdādī was one of Kubrā's most important students, whose work has not received the scholarly attention it deserves. His most important text, the *Tuḥfat al-barara fī al-masā'il al-'ashra,* which translates to *The Gem of Purity in the Ten Questions*, is one of the clearest cases for the relevance of Kubrawī Sufi thought to the stratification of Sufi communities and will provide us with the primary text for our investigation.

Al-Baghdādī's *Tuḥfa* has not yet been the subject of an extensive study. This is therefore an important step towards understanding the development of Kubrawī thought and its

[2] Al-Qushayrī, *al-Risālah,* 333-334.

relationship to the changes which Sufi communities underwent at the time. The *Tuḥfa* represents an important systematisation of Kubrā's ideas that many later Kubrawī writers heavily relied upon. This thesis will attempt to detail al-Baghdādī's theoretical framework as well as asking what this systematisation of Kubrawī ideas can tell us about the transition of Sufism in this period. This will address some glaring gaps in our understanding of Sufism in this period.

Each chapter of the *Tuḥfa* focuses on some aspect of Sufi practice. However al-Baghdādī's answers are often informed by significant theoretical discussions. Psychology and cosmology are interwoven with explanations of the origins of Sufi practices and ideal Sufi behaviour throughout the *Tuḥfa.* The text is immensely important for a number of reasons. It reveals a systematisation of Kubrawī Sufi theory through its incorporation of concepts found in al-Ghazālī's thought, and contributes to the gradual shift of the Sufi community towards *ṭarīqa* Sufism.

It is divided into ten chatpers. Chapters one and two answer questions pertaining to Sufi practice, from which legal school to follow to dress and appearance. Al-Baghdādī then turns to providing definition of shaykh-hood and discipleship in chapters three and four respectively. Chapters five and six detail the rules of seclusion and remembrance practices (*dhikr*), as well as discussing the production of dreams and visions and how to distinguish between their truths and falsehoods. Chapter seven attempts to answer the question of the origin of the Sufi cloak and details the practice of investiture. Chapters eight and nine answer questions pertaining to dispensations from the law and Sufi practice, and whether it is possible for the shaykh to break the religious law in accordance with his divine inspiration. Finally chapter ten contains a very brief response to questions regarding the correct relationship between Sufis, political rulers, and wider society, as well as a more extensive discussion of the practice of audition concerts (*samā'*).

1. The Kubrawiyya

The Kubrawiyya trace their origins to Najm al-Dīn Kubrā who was active in the 12th and 13th centuries. This was a turbulent time in the history of Iran and Central Asia, and a crucial period in the development of Sufism. The decline of the Saljuqs in Iran in the 12th century led to the emergence of the Khwarazmshahs as an independent empire, having previously been their vassals. While the first Khwarazmshah, Tekish (d. 596/1200) seems to have established the independence of his state successfully, the reign of his son 'Alā' al-Dīn Muḥammad (d. 617/1220) was marked by internal turmoil and a fractured political class. With a failed march on Baghdād against the Caliph al-Nāṣir, and internal strife between him and his mother, 'Alā' al-Dīn's poor judgement eventually incurred the wrath of Genghis Khan, leading to the Mongol invasions of 1220. This was an extremely significant event in the minds of Muslim writers and was characterised as one of the greatest devastations by historiographers such as al-Juwaynī and Ibn al-Athīr.[3]

Yet despite the turmoil of the period, we witness a flourishing of Sufi thought and the increasing importance of the Sufi lodge in society during this time. During these times of political uncertainty, there was a need for communities like Sufism and the *futuwwa* (chivalrous groups) to provide people with a much needed sense of cohesion, stability and continuity.[4] The Kubrawiyya are one such group whose ideas and communities survived, and which functioned as an order from around the 14th until at least the 17th century.[5] Afterwards there is little evidence of Kubrawī activity, however the shrine of Najm al-Dīn Kubrā remained an important site of religious devotion and pilgrimage so

[3] See Bosworth, 'Khwārazm-Shāhs', *Encyclopedia of Islam,* vol. 2.

[4] Ohlander, 'Inner Worldly', 15-16.

[5] Waley, 'The Kubrawiyyah', 103.

that the Kubrawiyya was assumed to be active in Central Asia even into the 20th century.[6]

In the medieval period, the Kubrawiyya were an extremely influential community of Sufis. When the Ilkhanate was established in Iran, it was Kubrawī shaykhs who presided over the conversion of the Mongol rulers to Islam.[7] Figures such as 'Alā' al-Dawla al-Simnānī (d. 736/1336) also had close ties to the Ilkhanid court and continued to establish Sufi communities which derived legitimacy from the Kubrawī spiritual lineage (*silsila).* Al-Simnānī's student, Sayyid 'Alī al-Hamadānī (d. 826/1423) is considered to represent the point at which the Kubrawiyya began to function as an order rather than a Sufi community with a loose network of members. Al-Hamadānī is also credited with proselytising and converting the population of Kashmir to Islam. Thus, the Kubrawiyya were a prominent political and social force for a long period in Iranian and Central Asian history.

The Kubrawiyya also produced a particular school of Sufi thought with distinctive psychological theories. Najm al-Dīn Kubrā made significant contributions to the development of Sufi psychology in his work *Fawā'iḥ al-jamāl wa-fawātiḥ al-jalāl.* Though the text is autobiographical in parts, it nonetheless represents the emergence of a particular psychological theory which heavily emphasises the conception of the senses, the imagination, the production of dreams and visions, and their relationship to the soul on its path to perfection.

Al-Baghdādī further developed these ideas significantly and systematised them in a more coherent and consistent manner in his *Tuḥfat al-barara*. Through al-Baghdādī's disciple, Najm al-Dīn al-Rāzī-Dāyā (d. 654/1256), these theories were disseminated

[6] Deweese, 'The Eclipse', 46.

[7] Waley, 'The Kubrawiyyah', 100.

throughout the Islamic world as al-Rāzī fled from the Mongols to Anatolia and then Iraq and produced his *Mirṣād al-'ibād* in Persian then in Arabic. While the school and many individual Kubrawīs have been the subjects of study by scholars, the figure of Majd al-Dīn al-Baghdādī seems not to have received much attention. this thesis will show that al-Baghdādī was a pivotal figure in Kubrawī thought and history.

By analysing al-Baghdādī's *Tuḥfa,* this study will show that Kubrā's ideas were significantly refined and explained by al-Baghdādī, producing a coherent systematisation of Kubrā's work. Furthermore, al-Baghdādī's influence can be seen in the writings of many other Kubrawīs who are indebted to this systematisation. It will be shown that al-Baghdādī was an influential figure who actively contributed to, and was representative of, a wider trend in Sufism through his systematisation of Kubrawī psychology, providing an important theoretical basis for the formalisation of Sufi behaviour.

Throughout this thesis al-Baghdādī will be referred to as a Kubrawī. The applicability of this term in reference to al-Baghdādī is not without its problems, as whether the first generation of Sufis who were attached to Kubrā understood themselves as "Kubrawīs" has been called into question. The reasons for this however will become clear through an analysis of al-Baghdādī's *Tuḥfa,* as answering this question is only possible after an extensive study, however the arugments will be summarised here.

While this became the name by which the order was known due to tracing its lineage back to Najm al-Dīn Kubrā, it is more likely that 'Alī al-Hamadānī marks the point at which Kubrā began to be conceived of as its founder. Deweese points to the 14th century hagiographical work on al-Hamadānī, the *Manqabat al-jawāhir,* to argue that by this time in the history of the Kubrawiyya, a sense of self-conscious distinctiveness emerges among members of the community, which signals its completed transition into an

order.[8] Hence it would appear problematic to refer to a first generation of Kubrawīs since it is unlikely that they would have conceived of themselves as such.

This throws some doubt on the suitability of the term "Kubrawī" for describing Kubrā and al-Baghdādī. However, it will be argued here that al-Baghdādī's work is evidence of the germination of what came to be called the Kubrawiyya, and in this sense represents the emergence of a distinct proto-Kubrawī community. This term can be reasonably applied to the earlier generation of Kubrawīs for a number of reasons. While we do not wish to propose that Kubrā and al-Baghdādī had established an order in the form that was evinced in the later periods in the history of Sufism, it will be made clear throughout this thesis that al-Baghdādī's work is evidence of an emerging self-conscious distinction between his own proto-Kubrawī community and other Sufi groups and communities.

It will be shown throughout this thesis that the existence of a self-consciously distinct community in al-Baghdādī's text is dependent upon a network of Sufi members who share a spiritual lineage to Kubrā through al-Baghdādī, and whose shared beliefs and practices are built upon theories which originate with Kubrā. These shared beliefs, practices and identities are built on theories which originate in Kubrā's writings and are developed by al-Baghdādī. Al-Baghdādī's development of Kubrawī thought renders it a lived experience through by virtue of a close connection between theory and practice. This becomes the basis for a collective identity which is particular to a network of Sufis attached to Kubrā and al-Baghdādī, as the community depends upon specifically Kubrawī theories which distinguish it from other Sufi communities.

Kubrā's thought is central to al-Baghdādī's formalisation of the structure of the Sufi community. It also consistently recurs in the works of later authors such as al-Simnānī.

[8] Deweese, 'Sayyid 'Alī Hamadānī', 140.

The development of theories of coloured visions, oneirology, micro-cosmology and the anatomy of the soul in the *Tuḥfa* which closely follow the *Fawā'iḥ* will be shown to inform the structure of the Sufi institution, its hierarchy, notions of lineage and belonging, and even the material culture of the community.

Hence, al-Baghdādī's systematisation of Kubra's thought is not restricted to purely theoretical discussions. It is also crucial for the existence of the community as a distinct group. It is therefore reasonable to refer to this early community as a proto-Kubrawī community given the centrality of Kubrā's ideas in the development of al-Baghdādī's thought and practice. Hence, while the first generation of Kubrawīs may not have conceived of themselves as such, the term "Kubrawī" is still useful for describing a collection of characteristics which originate with Kubrā and are significantly developed by al-Baghdādī.

Nevertheless, the question of continuity between the first generation of Kubawīs like al-Baghdādī and the Kubrawiyya order of al-Hamadānī remains difficult to determine. While there are consistencies in thought and practice, it is difficult to assess the persistence of Kubrā and al-Baghdādī's institutions and communities. Al-Simnānī, al-Hamadānī's teacher, positions himself within the Kubrawiyya yet his connection to the Kubrawī spiritual chain through 'Abd al-Raḥmān Isfarā'inī (d. 690/1291) rests only on a brief amount of time spent together and the remainder of their relationship seems to have been conducted through letters and spiritual visions. Despite an institutional continuity being somewhat tenuous in this case, it is important to accept al-Simnānī's conception of himself as being a part of the Kubrawī Sufi tradition given that much of his thought attests to the heavy influence of both al-Baghdādī and Kubrā. The connection is in fact plausible, Isfarā'inī who was trained by al-Baghdādī's student Raḍī al-Dīn 'Alī Lālā (d. 642/1244), was profoundly influenced by al-Baghdādī's articulation of shaykh-disciple conduct in the *Tuḥfa.* Given his close connection to al-Simnānī, it is very

likely that al-Baghdādī's contribution to the development of proto-Kubrawī identity influenced these later thinkers.[9]

Kubrā and al-Baghdādī functioned as separate shaykhs at the same time, which could have caused confusion over the correct sequence of lineage. Al-Rāzī, for example studied under Kubrā and al-Baghdādī but only refers to al-Baghdādī as "our shaykh" and hardly ever mentions Kubrā. Hence, it seems that al-Rāzī would be more likely to conceive of himself as a Baghdādian than a Kubrawī. This however does not detract from the applicability of the term proto-Kubrawī in describing al-Rāzī given that al-Baghdādī largely relied on Kubrā's thought in his own systematisation of psychology and practice. We will also show in this analysis that al-Baghdādī attempted to resolve this confusion over lineage caused by the existence of multiple shaykhs within one community through his discussion of the Shaykh of birth-right (*wilāda*) and the formalisation of the bond of companionship (*ṣuḥba*).

Throughout this study, a consistency between Kubrawī thought and practice will be highlighted, and its centrality to the emerging self-conscious communal identity will be evinced in al-Baghdādī's text. This can reasonably be described as proto-Kubrawī in character. This question of terminology is in a sense intertwined with the aims of this thesis, and only strengthens the case for urgently studying the work of al-Baghdādī as a figure who typifies the transition and transformation of Sufism into orders. This nascent Kubrawī thought and practice and its significance for the development of the Sufi community has hitherto been insufficiently explored and hence we may only fully answer the question of the applicability of the term 'proto-Kubrawī' after an in-depth study of al-Baghdādī's thought.

[9] See Landolt's Introduction to *Kāshif al-asrār.*

2. Scholarly context

Despite the importance of this period in the history of Sufism, our knowledge of Sufism's transition to orders remains incomplete. Recently, invaluable investigations have been conducted on the figure of 'Umar al-Suhrawardī and his institutionalisation of Sufism by scholars such as Erik Ohlander and Arin Shawqat Salamah-Qudsi, leading to a greater understanding of Sufism in the central Islamic lands including Iraq, the Levant and Anatolia during this period. By contrast the early Kubrawīs remain understudied in this regard and our knowledge of the development of Sufism in Iran at the time is patchy.

Studies which detail the institutionalisation of the Kubrawiyya have largely focused on the later periods of their activity. Scholars such as Devin Deweese and Shahzad Bashir have illuminated our understanding of the Kubrawiyya in later centuries, when it began to function as a fully-fledged order while our understanding of the earlier period remains opaque. However, the relevance of early Kubrawī thought to the institutionalisation of Sufism has managed to evade an in-depth investigation since much of the literature concerning the first generation of Kubrawīs focuses solely on the development of Kubrawī thought.

The first generation of Kubrawīs have traditionally been distinguished for their propensity in detailing and interpreting the internal psychological experiences of the Sufi. Certainly, Kubrā's focus on dream theory, coloured visions and the psycho-spiritual experiences of the Sufi stand out as some of the more captivating features of his work. However, this may also have given the impression that these early Kubrawīs were more interested in the internal, spiritual and mental dimensions of the human being, while paying little attention to the social and political importance of Sufism. Deweese for example, suggests that the Kubrawiyya were eventually supplanted by the

Naqshabandiyya due to the preference of the former for detailing dream and visionary experiences rather than engaging with societal and political concerns.[10] In opposition to this, we will show that the development of oneirology and visionary theory in al-Baghdādī's work was directly relevant to the social and political challenges of the 12th and 13th centuries.

This oversight is to some extent a symptom of neglecting a serious study of Majd al-Dīn al-Baghdādī's thought. So far, other Kubrawī works have eclipsed the *Tuḥfa* in terms of scholarly attention. Yet al-Baghdādī provides one of the clearest examples of the interconnection between Kubrawī thought and the institutionalisation of Sufism. Looking at Kubrā's work on its own without considering Majd al-Dīn al-Baghdādī and his *Tuḥfat al-barara* will not bring to light the connection between Kubrawī thought and changes within the Sufi community. Moreover, works attributed to Kubrā which do focus on Sufi practice such as the *Ādāb al-murīdīn* are of dubious authorship, as we will discuss.

Kubrā's most famous work, the *Fawā'iḥ al-jamāl wa-fawātiḥ al-jalāl,* does not tell us much about the development of Sufi communities. It provides much insight into Kubrā's thought. However, it is somewhat autobiographical in nature, describing the author's visions and experiences. Its style is fluid, shifting between theoretical expositions and recounting the author's visionary experiences, and as such its discussions are not intended to provide a complete and coherent expositions of the author's thought. Hence, it does not provide a systematic account of Kubrā's thought, nor does it reveal the relevance of this to the stratification of Sufi practice, the development of communal bonds or the centralisation of the shaykh's authority. As a result, its relationship to the transition of Sufism into orders is difficult to assess if the work is considered in isolation.

[10] Deweese, 'The Eclipse', 79-80.

By contrast the arguments in al-Baghdādī's work are more clearly set out, more coherently structured, and deal directly with very practical concerns. Yet the *Tuḥfa* is also an extremely theoretical work, invaluable for anyone wishing to understand Kubrā's thought in more depth as al-Baghdādī goes further than his teacher in explaining the mechanisms behind the experiences of visions and dreaming and the place of the soul and the imagination within this, as well as the framework for diagnosing the state of the soul through dream interpretation for example. Al-Baghdādī's oneirology, as well as being more systematic than Kubrā's, is also relevant to the formalisation and centralisation of the Sufi community. Scholarly treatment of early Kubrawī thought so far has not paid enough attention to the institutional implication behind Kubrawī thought with regard to dreams, visions, or psychology, and this study will aim to address this.

Al-Baghdādī's thought is crucial for understanding, not only Kubrā's ideas, but other important Kubrawī figures as well such as 'Alā' al-Dawla al-Simnānī and Najm al-Dīn al-Rāzī, both of whom have received much more attention than al-Baghdādī. These later Kubrawī authors clearly rely on the *Tuḥfa.* Al-Rāzī quotes directly from it in his work, the *mirṣād al-'ibād* and it will be shown that many of the passages in al-Rāzī's text owe more to al-Baghdādī's *Tuḥfa* than Kubrā's *Fawā'iḥ.* Yet al-Baghdādī's influence on these thinkers has not been adequately highlighted or recognised.

There is an abundance of material available detailing the thought of various Kubrawī figures. Most notably Jamal Elias on al-Simnānī, Hamid Algar on al-Rāzī, Landolt on Isfarā'inī, and Fritz Meier on Kubrā. None however has focused on al-Baghdādī. Yet, there is comparatively little which focuses on Majd al-Dīn al-Baghdādī. This study will fill an important gap in our knowledge by analysing al-Baghdādī's work which will also

allow us to better understand the works of the figures listed above. Hence, students of the Kubrawiyya will benefit immensely from an analysis of al-Baghdādī's work.

Connected to the question of the development Kubrawī thought and practice in this period is the rise of antinomianism, which has been addressed in recent studies. The work of Ahmet Karamustafa has been particularly useful in understanding the place of antinomian mystical groups such as the Qalandariyya and Ḥaydariyya in the 12th and 13th centuries and in the history of Sufism more generally. Karamustafa crucially connects the rise of antinomianism to the increasing stratification of the Sufi institution and its ever closer connection to the political establishment, which compromised its legitimacy.[11] Previously, it had been suggested that the rise in antinomianism was due to Mongol rule and the supposed similarity between the religion of these dervishes and Shamanism which encouraged the spread of Sufism.[12]

This theory regarding the origins of mystical groups such as the Qalandarīs has since lost ground as scholars such as Karamustafa present us with more credible frameworks. Our study will lend even more credence to the idea that antinomianism should be seen as a response to the institutionalisation of Sufism which entailed an increased centralisation of the shaykh's authority, increasing elitist notions, as well as its ever closer links with the political establishment. Moreover, given that the centre of power in the Mongol Ilkhanate was in Iran and that the rulers maintained a close connection to the Kubrawiyya, our study will be significant for calling into question the assertion that the Mongols had a hand in propagating antinomianism. Throughout our analysis we will show that al-Baghdādī's centralisation of authority around the Sufi shaykh has marked implications for the legitimacy of non-affiliated mystics and does not confine this to those who belong to antinomian communities.

[11] Karamustafa, 'Antinomian Sufis', 114.

[12] Trimingham, *The Sufi Orders*, 54.

While al-Baghdādī does attempt to restrict antinomianism, we will see that he does not single out any particular group or figure in doing so. Al-Baghdādī's strategy throughout is never to deny that non-affiliated Sufis have genuine spiritual experiences. Instead he argues that they are not fit for institutional positions or for teaching aspiring Sufis. Hence he bars non-affiliated mystics from institutional positions. At the same time, al-Baghdādī will be shown to allow some exceptions for antinomian behaviour in granting the Sufi shaykh some degree of freedom to dispense with what he terms the "manifest" *sharīʿa*. This dispensation is essential for the elitist conception of Sufism revealed in al-Baghdādī's work, whereby the Sufi shaykh is the greatest authority in Muslim society.

Hence, al-Baghdādī's work should not be seen as a polemic against antinomianism. Rather its core aim in this regard is to centralise the authority of the shaykh within the Sufi community, placing institutional restrictions on expressions of antinomianism by reserving any seeming contravention of Islamic law or custom as the right of the qualified shaykh. Such a reading lends more credence to the notion that antinomianism emerged as a reaction to the increasing institutionalisation of Sufism as scholars such as Karamustafa have suggested.

3. Aims

All the aims of this thesis will be part of an attempt to understand the significance of al-Baghdādī's thought for this transitional period in the history of Sufism. The gaps in our understanding of the development of Kubrawī Sufi communities are accompanied by gaps in our understanding of the development of Kubrawī thought. There are important contributions to be made by this study in both areas. Before detailing the relevance of al-Baghdādī's thought for the development of the Sufi community, we will need to provide an account of his theoretical framework which may only be grasped

with an exposition of his psychology. This psychology is consistent with Kubrā's however it is also more systematic and coherent in its approach. This will be an important project in itself, as it will show that al-Baghdādī systematises Kubrā's thought, and reveals the importance of the adoptions of key philosophical notions through al-Ghazālī for the development of Kubrawī psychology. And through this analysis of al-Baghdādī's psychology we will also be able to detail al-Baghdādī's oneirology which is significant for understanding the institutionalisation of Sufism in the Kubrawī context. This will also provide new insight regarding the impact of al-Baghdādī's work on later Kubrawī authors such as al-Rāzī, al-Simnānī and Isfarā'inī.

Works on the Kubrawiyya tend to focus either on Sufi theory or institutionalisation but the two are hardly discussed in tandem. This study will attempt to bridge this divide in scholarship, connecting theory and practice in the work of al-Baghdādī in order to witness his institutionalisation of Kubrawī Sufism. It will also reveal the importance of al-Baghādī's role as a thinker who signalled the transformation of Sufism from communities into orders by proving that his development of Kubrawī theory is inseparable from his efforts to institutionalise the Sufi community. Hence our study will elucidate how early Kubrawī thought informed the institutionalisation of the Sufi community.

We will show that al-Baghdādī employs Kubrawī theory in order to centralise authority around the shaykh, as well as stratify the hierarchy of the Sufi community. In addition, we will show that the *Tuḥfa* is evidence of the emergence of a self-conscious sense of identity which marks the proto-Kubrawī community out from other Sufi groups, something more commonly associated with later Sufi orders who were more fiercely competitive. In connection to this, our study will also offer an important comparison of the early Kubrawiyya and early Suhrawardiyya. The difference between the two communities in this early period has not been fully realised thus far.

This study will also elucidate the relationship between the early Kubrawiyya and the political class under the Khwarazmshahs. Caught between the decline of the Saljuqs and the invasions of the Mongols, this was tumultuous period in the history of Iran and Khwarazm which saw much violence and political turmoil as well as the rise of antinomian mystical groups. Studying al-Baghdādī's work will provide a valuable insight into Sufi responses to changing social and political realities.

This period is also accompanied by a rise in antinomian activity, and the question recurs throughout the *Tuḥfa*. Hence, one of our primary aims in this study is to address al-Baghdādī's discussions of antinomianism and dispensations from the law and Sufi practice, as well as detailing his thoughts on the relationship between Sufis and political rulers and considering what this may tell us about Sufism in this period. Both these issues feature prominently throughout the *Tuḥfa* and our treatment of them here will reveal new considerations for the study of these topics. Our study will attempt to broaden our understanding of the relationship between Sufism and antinomianism by showing that questions regarding antinomianism, political affiliation, and the role of the Sufi in wider society are inseparable in the *Tuḥfa.*

While on the surface al-Baghdādī's insistence that a Sufi may not dispense with Sufi practice or break the religious law seems to be solely directed at heretical mystics, these questions also determine the extent to which Sufis may initiate lay-affiliates into their ranks which at times did include political rulers. In addition, the question of antinomianism will be shown to be directly relevant to the emerging eltisim of the Sufi institution which had to compete against other legal and Sufi institutions for influence.

This study will show that all these questions are in some way tied to the interdependence of Kubrawī theory and practice which al-Baghdādī crafts and

emphasises. This theoretical framework is drawn upon in order to address a number of problems faced by the Sufi community at the time, from rising antinomianism as well as political and societal turmoil and dislocation. In this regard, al-Baghdādī's psychological framework will prove to be an extremely useful discursive tool, able to address these very pertinent practical purposes.

4. Structure

In the first chapter of this thesis we will consider al-Baghdādī's biography and context in order to highlight his importance which has been largely overlooked. Here we will bring to light evidence of al-Baghdādī's intimate connections to the political class. We will discuss his position in the Kubrawī community in light of competing hagiographies which present problems for our understanding of the relationship between al-Baghdādī and Kubrā, as well as other Kubrawī figures. Crucially, we will point out al-Baghdādī's significance as the shaykh of Najm al-Dīn al-Rāzī and Rāḍī al-Dīn 'Alī Lālā, two of the most important figures for the dissemination of Kubrawī thought and practice who viewed al-Baghdādī as their primary shaykh rather than Kubrā. We will also attempt to make sense of the ambiguities surrounding al-Baghdādī's death. This will serve to highlight that al-Baghdādī was a historically significant figure whose work was highly influential.

We will then begin our analysis of the *Tuḥfa.* Our aim in the second chapter is to provide an analysis of al-Baghdādī's psychological theory. This provides the framework upon which most of al-Baghdādī's arguments are built. Here we will provide an account of al-Baghdādī's systematisation of Kubrā's work. We will show here that the reception of important ideas from al-Ghazālī, Avicenna and other Sufi thinkers is extremely important for al-Baghdādī as it provides him with the conceptual tools for his

systematisation of Kubrawī thought. We will detail, here some defining features of Kubrawī thought such as visions of coloured lights and dreams in light of al-Baghdādi's text. This will show that al-Baghdādī presents a much more coherent account of the relationship between the soul and the body including the inner and outer senses than Kubrā does. We will also highlight the extent to which this framework is consistent with later Kubrawī works which indicates the influence of al-Baghdādī's ideas on later thinkers.

In the 3rd chapter we will move onto detailing al-Baghdādī's account of the shaykh and the disciple. Here we will show that the theoretical framework detailed in the chapter on psychology is employed in structuring relationships within the Sufi community. We will see that through this al-Baghdādī attempts to further centralise the authority of the shaykh, as well as crafting a clear hierarchy of members and developing rules which govern Sufi behaviour. We will show that he also establishes a sense of communal belonging through his recourse to oneirology.

In the 4th chapter we turn to the question of antinomianism which features prominently in the *Tuḥfa.* Here we will show that al-Baghdādī attempts to control expressions of antinomianism through institutionalisation and further stratification of the Sufi community. Through these efforts, dispensation from the law becomes the right of the shaykh alone. This highlights the emerging elitist notions of the Sufi institution above other institutions such as the legal school. Again, the psychological framework is employed extensively to maintain these positions. This is seen in al-Baghdādī's development of a detailed prophetology which is intertwined with his discussion of antinomianism.

Finally, we will discuss al-Baghdādī's conception of investiture. This offers an important insight into the development of a distinctly Kubrawī Sufi identity against other

emerging communal Sufi identities. This identity will be shown to be a consequence of the strong connection between theory and practice in al-Baghdādī's thought which links the discursive and institutional in the *Tuḥfa.* The emergence of such an identity is important for the transition of Sufism into orders, as it is indicative of competition between different Sufi groups with distinct identities. Furthermore, we will also highlight the relevance of discussions of antinomianism and dispensations from the law to the relationship between Sufis and political rulers in this chapter.

Chapter 1

Al-Baghdādī's Life in Context

Majd al-Dīn Abū Sa'īd Sharaf ibn al-Mu'ayyad ibn Abū al-Fatḥ al-Baghdādī's was born in 565/1169-70 and died in 616/1219. Key details of his life and the circumstances of his death are relatively well known, and while the particulars of these accounts do differ, there is a consistency in placing his execution at the hands of the Khwarazmshah 'Alā' al-Dīn Muḥammad. Despite this general accord regarding the circumstances of his death, the causes of his death are marked by controversy. This variation in the information passed down to us regarding al-Baghdādī's life and death has led to differing interpretations regarding his place within Kubrawī Sufism and his relationship with his teacher, Najm al-Dīn Kubrā.

Al-Baghdādī's standing within Kubrawī Sufism seems to have been understated. This may be due to the influence of the hagiographer Jāmī whose account of al-Baghdādī's death asserts a rupture between al-Baghdādī and Kubrā. This may have contributed to the neglect of al-Baghdādī as he is not often credited as the primary shaykh of some key Kubrawī figures who undoubtedly viewed him as their main spiritual mentor. Furthermore, his systematisation of Kubrā's thought clearly had a lasting impact on many Kubrawī authors. Yet the conflicting biographical and hagiographical accounts seem to have affected the way in which scholars have perceived al-Baghdādī's position within the Kubrawī Sufi network. Many of these accounts intend to diminish al-Baghdādī's significance in favour of other Kubrawī figures, which has in turn led to the neglect of al-Baghdādī in scholarship.

This chapter will reassess the details of al-Baghdādī's life by analysing the differing accounts available to us from medieval historiographers, hagiographers and

biographers, in addition to drawing on al-Baghdādī's own writings. Through this analysis, al-Baghdādī will be considered in a new light. So far his politically prominent position, his crucial contribution towards the development of the Kubrawī order, and his influence upon some of the most prominent and prolific Kubrawī figures has been underestimated. Reconstructing al-Baghdādī's biography will have an important impact on our discussion of the *Tuḥfa,* allowing us to consider the implications of al-Baghdādī's Sufism not only for its theoretical contribution, but for its social and political relevance as well.

Unfortunately, we will not be able to decisively resolve all of the ambiguities which mark the circumstances of al-Baghdādī's death here due to the lack of material available to us, as well as the scope of this thesis. However, we will posit a reading which corroborates the evidence presented. Despite the lack of detail, we can come to some important conclusions in a reassessment of al-Baghdādī's life, context, and the circumstances of his death. These conclusions will provide us with important information regarding al-Baghdādī's relationship with Kubrā, his attitude towards political rulers, as well as his standing within the Sufi community of his day. Such questions are directly relevant to this study as they will contextualise the *Tuḥfa* within the challenges that the al-Baghdādī and his Sufi community faced.

1. The Sources

Most of the information about al-Baghdādī is found in biographical and hagiographical material. The latter accounts are more extensive, while the former tend to comprise of shorter entries. Yet the biographical works such as Muḥammad 'Awfī's and Ḥamdullah al-Mustawfī al-Qazwīnī's are important for recounting particular meetings between al-

Baghdādī and other prominent figures.[13] We can add to these sources information from al-Baghdādī's own writings such as some passages in the *Tuḥfa,* as well as in his letters to Sharaf al-Dīn al-Balkhī and his disciple Raḍī al-Dīn 'Alī Lālā.[14] There exists a certificate of instruction (*ijāzat irshād)* from al-Baghdādī to the same 'Alī Lālā.[15] Furthermore, 'Alā' al-Dawla al-Simnānī provides us with biographical details in his *Chihil majlis,* while Najm al-Dīn al-Rāzī's *Mirṣād al-'ibād* contains some clues regarding al-Baghdādī's standing within the Sufi community. All these figures seem to have considered al-Baghdādī to be a chief influence in their spiritual careers. Lālā in particular is extremely important for the survival of the order, as the later Kubrawī order derived its lineage from him, while al-Rāzī's work achieved widespread popularity.

Information can also be found, to a lesser extent in literary works. We are able to find references to al-Baghdādī in poetry which indicates that his image had entered the public imagination at the time. For example, Fakhr al-Dīn al-'Irāqī's (d. 697/1289) '*Ushshāq-nāma* portrays Kubrā being smitten with love for the youthful al-Baghdādī and recounts an intimate relationship between the two friends.[16] Hence their relationship was romanticised very early on, indicating that al-Baghdādī's and Kubrā's personalities remained in the public imagination after their deaths.

However, the most extensive biographical accounts which contemporary scholars have relied upon are hagiographical in nature, and some appear more than a century or two after his death. One of the more detailed accounts is found in 'Abd al-Raḥmān Jāmī's (d.

[13] Al-Mustawfī al-Qazwīnī, *Ta'rīkhī Guzīda,* vol 2, 215.

[14] Lālā was trained by Kubrā but was then sent to al-Baghdādī for further refinement. He received certificates and *khirqas* from both shaykhs. Lālā seems to have been a dear friend to al-Baghdādī who refers to him with much affection in his letters. By contrast Kubrā's letter to Lālā seems more formulaic and less intimate.

[15] Al-Baghdādī, *Khirqa Hazrāmīkhī,* 165.

[16] Al-'Irāqī, '*Ushshāq-nāma,* 46-47.

897/1492) *Nafaḥāt al-uns.* It provides details regarding the origins of al-Baghdādī's family, his initiation into the Sufi path, his influence on 'Alā' al-Dawla al-Simnānī, his temporary fall-out with Kubrā and the circumstances of his death.[17] While the importance of these hagiographical accounts for constructing al-Baghdādī's biography should not be discounted, there is a need to question the narrative of al-Baghdādī's death. These later narratives embellish al-Baghdādī's death with information not found in older material. They emerge in the context of distinct Sufi communities and orders competing for social and political influence. Before we begin our analysis of these hagiographical sources however, it is essential to situate al-Baghdādī in the wider context of the political and influential figures who make up his friends and acquaintances first.

2. Relations with influential figures and the ruling classes

That al-Baghdādī was influential is of course seen in the homage paid to him by al-Simnānī, al-Rāzī and 'Alī Lālā. While his contributions in Sufism influenced both contemporary and later authors, his influence during his day goes beyond his circle of Sufis. It is clear that he was also a socially and politically significant figure. During the reign of the Khwarazmshah 'Alā' al-Dīn Mūḥammad (1200-1220), it appears that despite the political turmoil, literary and religious learning was flourishing, especially in Nishapur.[18] This is evinced by Muḥammad 'Awfī's (d. 639/1242) biography of poets, the *Lubāb al-albāb's* which comprises of an extensive amount of poems, many of which were composed by Sufi shaykhs and legal scholars from that region. During this time, we can identify a number of figures with links to the Khwarazmshah's court and also kept company with al-Baghdādī. Many of these figures can be found in 'Awfī's *Lubāb* and

[17] Jāmī, *Nafaḥāt al-uns,* 487-492.

[18] Nizam al-Dīn, *Introduction to the Jawāmi',* 4.

Jawāmi' and are listed as scholars and Sufis of Nishapur, indicating that al-Baghdādī did close connections with the scholarly community of Nishapur.

Among them is the imam Abu Sa'īd Muḥammad ibn Fakhr al-Dīn 'Abd al-'Azīz al-Kūfī. Al-Baghdādī relates an anecdote from this figure on his own authority, indicating that he had met him personally. He is referred to by al-Baghdādī as "the shaykh" Muḥammad al-Kūfī.[19] While al-Baghdādī's references him as a Sufi, he is also described as a Hanafi scholar by 'Awfī.[20] This coalescence of Sufism and legal scholarship is common amongst contemporaries of al-Baghdādī and 'Awfī often refers to these figures in both their capacity as Sufis and jurist. Al-Kūfī was close to 'Alā' al-Dīn Khwarazmshah's father and the first Khwarazmshah, Tekish (d. 598/1200). The historian al-Juwaynī affirms this and states that Kūfī was one of the most distinguished imams of his day and held the posts of *qāḍī* (judge) and "shaykh of Islam" of Khurasan.[21] Al-Kufī was killed by one of Khwarazmshah Tekish's enemies, Menqlī Beg in Nishapur in the year 582/1186-7. This is an important piece of information since al-Baghdādī does not refer to Kūfī as having passed away in the *Tuḥfa,* indicating that it could have been written prior to al-Kūfī's death.

Al-Baghdādī also had much closer ties to the Khwarazmshah's court. His brother Bahā' al-Dīn al-Baghdādī, author of a collection of letters known as *Risālat al-tawāṣul ilā al-tarāsul,* was one of Khwarazmshah's secretaries. Bahā' al-Dīn seems to have been more active in politics during Tekish's reign and was imprisoned by Menqlī Beg after he was sent to conclude a peace treaty with him prior to the killing of al-Kūfī.[22] He is mentioned again in al-Juwaynī's history, in a discussion with the latter's grandfather

[19] Al-Baghdādī, *Tuḥfat al-barara,* 36.
[20] 'Awfi, *Lubāb al-albāb, vol. 2, 228.*
[21] Al-Juwaynī, *The World Conqueror*, 295.
[22] Al-Juwaynī, *The World Conqueror*, 294.

Bahā' al-Dīn Mūḥammad ibn 'Alī al-Juwaynī, in the presence of Tekish.[23] He seems to have cultivated a close relationship with Tekish and is seen accompanying the Khwarazmshah on various travels. He appears less often during the reign of Tekish's son 'Alā' al-Dīn Muḥammad.

Another important figure, Shihāb al-Dīn Aḥmad al-Khwaqī was the *wakīl,* or secretary of the Khwarazmshah. Al-Juwaynī also refers to him as a revered imam and a "pillar of the faith", and mentions his efforts in mobilising the people with his sermons to the defence of Khwarazm against the attempted invasion of the Ghurids in the wake of Tekish's death.[24] It seems that despite his efforts in aiding 'Alā' al-Dīn Khwarazmshah's empire during his early reign, Khwaqī later had doubts about his own role within the state. 'Awfī mentions a correspondence between al-Baghdādī and Khwaqī, in which he asked al-Baghdādī for advice regarding his service of 'Alā' al-Dīn Khwarazmshah.[25] Barthold sums up al-Baghdādī's reply with the following:

> It is no sin to be in the king's service, that he had the opportunity of helping the wronged and of consoling the afflicted, and of attaining in these ways to both earthly happiness and heavenly blessing more certainly than by means of fasting and prayers.[26]

It seems that it was common amongst the religious classes to be hesitant in their dealings with the ruling classes. As we shall see, 'Alā' al-Dīn Khwarazmshah's reign was marked by much more instability and corruption in comparison to the rule of his father Tekish. Khwaqī's questioning of the ethics of serving the sultan seems to accompany Tekish's death and 'Alā' al-Dīn's rise to power. This is corroborated by 'Awfī who attended the meetings between al-Baghdādī and Khwaqī in the year 600/1204. It is

[23] Al-Juwaynī, *The World Conqueror*, 299.
[24] Al-Juwaynī, *The World Conqueror*, 322.
[25] See 'Awfī, *Jawāmi' al-ḥikāyāt,* vol. 4.
[26] Barthold, *Turkestan,* 376.

important to note here that al-Baghdādī's interactions with the ruling classes seems to sour around this time as well. In his letter defending himself against accusations made against him by state officials, al-Baghdādī mentions that news had reached him of the vizier Niẓām al-Mulk al-Mas'ūd's death.[27] According to al-Juwaynī, Niẓām al-Mulk al-Mas'ūd was assassinated in the year 596/1200.[28] This means that al-Baghdādī's letter detailing the accusations levelled against him must have been at some point after 'Alā' al-Dīn Muḥammad came to power. In the letter he goes on to complain about the widespread corruption of the ruling classes and expresses his desire to leave Nishapur and return to Khwarazm. The reference to Khwarazm here is important as it was ruled by the Queen mother Turkān Khatūn who was the Shah 'Alā' al-Dīn's main internal adversary.

Al-Baghdādī's popularity reached far beyond his friends, acquaintances and prominent political associations; his popularity had spread among the general populace too. It is important to remember that 'Awfī wrote a biography of poets and therefore indicates al-Baghdādī's relevance to this genre of literature. 'Awfī, who met al-Baghdādī, distinguishes him from other Sufis by referring to him as the shaykh of shaykhs (*shaykh al-shuyūkh Ḥaḍrat-i Khwārazm).* This was the official term given to a Sufi shaykh who was credited as the director of the main Sufi lodge in the region by state officials.[29] 'Awfī also tells us that al-Baghdādī was a preacher at the court of the Khwarazmshah and a poet, and reasserts that al-Baghdādī was unjustly executed by referring to him as a martyr.[30] 'Awfī also reproduces verses eulogising al-Baghdādī after his death. These verses were written by an imam named Ḍiyā' al-Dīn al-Bisṭāmī to whom he refers to as a scholar of *sharī'a* (law) and *ṭarīqa* (Sufism).[31] The eulogy corroborates the account of al-

[27] Al-Baghdādī, *Khirqa Hazrāmīkhī,* 171.

[28] Al-Juwaynī, *The World Conqueror*, 314.

[29] Lewisohn, 'Iranian Islam', 13.

[30] 'Awfi, *Lubāb al-albāb, 250-251;* Landolt, 'Aṭṭār, Sufism and Ismailism', 9.

[31] 'Awfi, *Lubāb al-albāb, 252.*

Baghdādī's execution by drowning, and adds credibility to the notion that the execution of al-Baghdādī alienated the religious classes and institutions, both legal and Sufi, who mourned the shaykh's death.[32]

Al-Baghdādī is shown to have had some connection with other prominent figures of his day. It is likely that he had some contact with the famous poet Farīd al-Dīn 'Aṭṭār (d. 627/1230), though whether he trained the poet in Sufism cannot be known for sure. E.G. Browne highlights a tradition that states that al-Baghdādī had taught 'Aṭṭār medicine, but states that this seems unlikely.[33] However, 'Aṭṭār does refer to a shaykh named Majd al-Dīn al-Khwārazmī in some versions of the *Tadhkirat al-Awliyā'*; however the name of Aḥmad al-Khuwārī is given in another manuscript.[34] Al-Khuwārī is one of al-Baghdādī's disciples and this would still indicate the likelihood of 'Aṭṭār and al-Baghdādī having had some connection.

Furthermore, what is attributed to this figure in the *Tadhkirat* alludes to the execution of al-Baghdādī as al-Khuwārī laments over the loss of "great leaders." Hence, Landolt argues that the lamentation should be attributed to al-Khuwārī, and not al-Baghdādī. In this case al-Khuwārī's lamentation over "the loss of great leaders" would most likely refer to al-Baghdādī. Landolt has also pointed out that some shared terminology between the Kubrawīyya and 'Aṭṭār.[35] The appearance of particularly Kubrawī phrases in 'Aṭṭār's work does suggest some familiarity with Kubrawīs. Al-Baghdādī for example, often uses phrases such as travelling in God (*sayr fī Allāh)* and journeying in the world of God's attributes (*safar fī 'ālam ṣifāṭ Allāh).*[36]

[32] Morgan, *Medieval Persia,* 50.
[33] Browne, *Literary History,* Vol. 3, 508.
[34] Landolt, 'Aṭṭār, Sufism and Ismailism', 10.
[35] Landolt, 'Aṭṭār, Sufism and Ismailism', 9-10.
[36] Al-Baghdādī, *Tuḥfat al-barara,* 13; 7-8.

These phrases function as markers which distinguish a Sufi disciple from a shaykh. The disciple travels *to* God while the shaykh travels *in* God. That these peculiar phrases are repeated by ʻAṭṭār strengthens the case of the two having had some connection.[37] There are further similarities to be found between the two thinkers with regard to prophetology, as well as the notion of spiritual flight (*ṭayr*). Because of the prominence of this metaphor, al-Baghdādī seems to employ language which is echoed by ʻAṭṭār's *Manṭiq al-ṭayr,* or Conference of the Birds.[38] The term "*manṭiq al-ṭayr*" also appears in the first line of Kubrā's *Fawā'iḥ.*[39] It therefore seems likely that ʻAṭṭār could have had contact with al-Baghdādī. This suggests further areas where al-Baghdādī's influence may have been sensed, notably, in the field of poetry and literature for example. It is clear that al-Baghdādī was a prominent figure in society in general. He seems to have contributed to poetry and literature in addition to his eminence as a Sufi teacher.

The circumstance of his execution at the hands of the Khwarazmshah also tells us that al-Baghdādī was a politically significant figure at the time. Thus al-Mustawfī al-Qizwīnī mentions that al-Baghdādī was put to death due to associating (*muʻāsharat)* with the Khwarazmshah's mother.[40] Fritz Meier asserts that al-Baghdādī married the mother of Khwarazmshah in secret based on a letter he wrote to Lālā, however upon closer inspection this seems unlikely, since the letter only mentions a marriage to a woman with the title *Khātūn* and does not specify any names. The letter also states that the marriage took place by the request of the queen mother Turkan Khatūn, which would be odd phrasing if she married him herself.[41]

[37] Landolt, 'Aṭṭār, Sufism and Ismailism', 10.

[38] Al-Baghdādī, *Tuḥfat al-barara,* 11. Al-Baghdādī is most probably referring to Kubrā here.

[39] Kubrā, *Fawā'iḥ,* 121.

[40] Al-Mustawfī al-Qazwīnī, *Ta'rīkh-i-Guzīda,* 215.

[41] Meier, 'An Exchange of Letters', 247; al-Baghdādī, *Khirqa Hazārmīkhī,* 170-173.

Al-Baghdādī himself defends his secret marriage to the khatūn against criticisms of indecency and adultery levelled at him in a letter to 'Alī Lālā, but he does not explicitly state that the princess was the queen mother herself.[42] In any case, the marriage to a princess with the blessing of the queen mother would have placed al-Baghdādī in a powerful position since the Khwarazmshah 'Alā' al-Dīn's adversary and the greatest source of internal unrest within his empire was his own mother who exercised more power than her son.[43]

Willhelm Barthold sites the advanced age of the queen mother and al-Baghdādī by this time and rules out the possibility of their marriage.[44] Despite this he maintains that the execution of al-Baghdādī "offended both his mother and the priesthood" interpreting the reports of a love affair as a conflation of the fact that the military and religious classes had united against the Khwarazmshah.[45] With the military elite loyal to her, she imposed her will in the administration of the country and proclaimed herself protectoress of the world and faith.[46] Al-Juwaynī also states:

> She had her own separate court and state officials and disposed of her own separate stipends and fiefs. Nevertheless her power extended over the sultan, his finances and his high officers and officials. She used to hold secret revelries and it was through her that many an ancient house was overthrown.[47]

While it is clear from his letter that al-Baghdādī did marry a princess in secret and this did cause accusations of indecency be levelled against him, it will become apparent to us that political rivalry is more likely to be at the heart of this controversy. In his letter

[42] Al-Baghdādī, *Khirqa Hazrāmīkhī,* 170-173.
[43] Morgan, *Medieval Persia,* 49.
[44] Barthold, *Turkestan,* 376.
[45] Barthold, *Turkestan,* 375-377.
[46] Haqq, *Chingiz Khan,* 27.
[47] Al-Juwaynī, *The World Conqueror*, 466.

to Lālā, defending himself against these accusations, al-Baghdādī reveals hints of a close relationship with "Ulugh Turkān Khatūn commander of the world."[48] It seems that his marriage was in the interest of the queen mother, and such an alignment would indeed contribute to some animosity towards al-Baghdādī at the Khwarazmshah 'Alā' al-Dīn's court. There are some important conclusions we can draw from this. It appears that the relationship between the religious establishment and the Khwarazmshah's state sours after Tekish's death. This coincides with greater internal conflict within the ruling classes with the queen mother and 'Alā' al-Dīn Muḥammad vying for control. Such a situation is likely to have created competing networks of patronage relationships which would disrupt the religious institutions. This is important to bear in mind for the assessment of al-Baghdādī's death.

3. Competing hagiographies

In Jāmī's account of al-Baghdādī's life, al-Baghdādī's family is said to have come to Khurasan from Baghdād to serve as the Khwarazmshah 'Alā' al-Dīn Muḥammad's court physicians. He tells us that more than one member of his family were physicians, before moving on to give a brief account of his early life and the circumstances of his death. While still quite young, al-Baghdādī abandons his courtly life to join a Sufi lodge, at which point his family offered to send ten Turkish slaves to serve the Sufi lodge in his stead, which was rejected. That al-Baghdādī came from a family with a medical background and had connections to the political classes is asserted in the *Khirqa Hazārmīkhī*, which states that al-Baghdādī himself was a court physician prior to his setting out onto the Sufi path and joining Kubrā.[49] Al-Baghdādī's close ties to courtly life and political classes, as well as the wealth of his family are indicated from the very beginning of Jāmī's hagiography. Jāmī also describes al-Baghdādī's appearance as

[48] Al-Baghdādī, *Khirqa Hazārmīkhī,* 171.

[49] See al-Baghdādī, *Khirqa Hazrāmīkhī,* 165.

"delicate" and pleasant, perhaps based on the physical description ascribed to al-Baghdādī by al-'Irāqī.[50] Hence, Jāmī's account is in accord with a number of early and near-contemporary sources focusing on al-Baghdādī.

Despite this accord between early and later sources, some events in Jāmī's account of al-Baghdādī's death are contentious and are not found in earlier material. The account of al-Baghdādī's death is often cited by modern scholars of Kubrawī Sufism, however that it is heavily influenced by competing hagiographical traditions seems to have been overlooked. Jāmī's assertion of a rift between al-Baghdādī and Kubrā, and the implicit diminishment of al-Baghdādī's place in the Kubrawī school which this represents should not be taken at face value. The tension between al-Baghdādī and Kubrā in this account can be explained by competing hagiographical traditions among later Sufis, as well as an attempt to deal with the complex relationships and networks of authority among Kubrawīs in al-Baghdādī's time.

Here Jāmī quotes al-Baghdādī as saying: "I used to be an egg on the edge of the river, and Najm al-Dīn [Kubrā] was a hen who took me under the wing of training. Now I have emerged from the egg and become like a duck; I enter the water while my shaykh still stands on the bank."[51] Kubrā receives word of this and proclaims: "May he die in a river."[52] Afterwards al-Baghdādī apologises to Kubrā and asks for his forgiveness, and while Kubrā's forgiveness is forthcoming, Jāmī maintains that the prophecy is nevertheless fulfilled when 'Alā al-Dīn Khwarazmshah has al-Baghdādī drowned in the Oxus river in 616/1219.[53]

---

[50] Jāmī, *Nafaḥāt al-uns,* 487-492.

[51] See Algar's introduction to *The Path of God's Bondsmen,* 9.

[52] See Algar's introduction to *The Path of God's Bondsmen,* 9.

[53] Jāmī also lists the possible date of death as 606/1209. This is corroborated in one manuscript of Najm al-Dīn Rāzī's *Baḥr al-ḥaqā'iq*. Shpall asserts that this text which is found in Sulaymaniye library was edited and signed by al-Rāzī himself, however this assertion does not seem to be completely verifiable based only on a difference in hand writing and modes of address. While the alternate date of death may be

While some aspects of the account of al-Baghdādī's death in Jāmī's *Nafaḥāt* accord with earlier sources, for example in placing the blame on the Khwarazmshah 'Alā' al-Dīn Muḥammad, as well as his drowning in a river, his assertion of a rift between al-Baghdādī and Kubrā is unlikely and is invested with competing hagiographical claims. The account betrays competition regarding the inheritance of the Kubrawī lineage by later Sufis, as well as tensions between al-Baghdādī and other Sufis at the time.

Jāmī's account of al-Baghdādī's death is obviously intended to emphasise Kubrā's authority and rank, and despite the fact that it was written much later, most of the information presented in the *Nafaḥāt* is sourced from al-Simnānī who was born about 40 years after al-Baghdādī's death.[54] It includes a number of stories taken from al-Simnānī's *Chihil Majlis* and even recounts a dream al-Baghdādī had where he is said to have asked the Prophet Muhammad about Avicenna, and learns that his method was mistaken and that he was veiled from truth.[55] Al-Simnānī may have had access to earlier material and as we have seen, some of his assertions find reinforcement in al-Baghdādī's and 'Alī Lālā's exchange of letters.

However, one detail present in Jāmī's account which is missing from earlier sources is the supposed controversy and tension between al-Baghdādī and Kubrā. Hamid Algar takes Najm al-Dīn al-Rāzī's silence regarding Kubrā, in contrast to his consistent mention and praise of al-Baghdādī, as evidence that there may indeed have been a rift between the master and his disciple.[56] Yet that al-Rāzī would then choose to continue

possible it seems to conflict with the majority of other accounts. See Shpall, 'A Note on Najm al-Dīn al-Rāzī'.

[54] Meier, 'An Exchange of Letters', 246.

[55] Corbin, *Visionary Recital*, 244.

[56] See Algar's introduction to *Mirṣād,* 9.

Kubrā's Qur'anic tafsir, as Ballanfat and Elias assert,[57] after omitting him from his other works for this reason seems odd. Elias further argues that the act of writing a *tafsīr* in the tradition of Kubrā's would be considered an act of piety and an expression of loyalty to one's teachers.[58] It is more likely that al-Rāzī's focus on al-Baghdādī is simply because he was his primary teacher and master.

It remains difficult to conceive of either al-Simnānī or al-Rāzī, both of whom had great reverence for al-Baghdādī, bearing any bitterness towards Kubrā whose ideas and sayings they repeated, as they were clearly built upon ideas in al-Baghdādī's *Tuḥfa*. Furthermore this story is absent from other biographies and hagiographies which emphasise Kubrā's foresight in a different manner, predicting the Mongol invasions as God's punishment for the execution of al-Baghdādī, without cursing him.[59] In these narratives Kubrā is undoubtedly upset at the injustice which befalls al-Baghdādī without any indication of alienation between the two shaykhs. This divine retribution for the murder of al-Baghdādī is also contained in Jāmī's account which seems to sit uneasily with Kubrā's outrage at al-Baghdādī's supposed hubris.[60] So Jāmī's account itself does attempt to resolve the uncomfortable rift it creates by having Kubrā forgive al-Baghdādī and turn his anger on the Khwarazmshah instead who brings about the Mongol invasions through his maltreatment of Kubrā's friend and student. This results in some inconsistency whereby Kubrā causes, laments over, and even avenges al-Baghdādī's death through divinely decreed events.

If we look for clues within al-Baghdādī's own writings, we find only two incidents which suggest a potential tension between him and his teacher. One occurs in the *Tuḥfat al-barara* where al-Baghdādī states that after a 40 day seclusion Kubrā had ordered him to

[57] Ballanfat, 'Reality and Image'; Elias, 'Sufi tafsīr Reconsidered', 48.
[58] Elias, 'Sufi tafsīr Reconsidered', 52.
[59] Al-Mustawfī Qazwīnī, *Ta'rīkh-i-Guzīda,* 215.
[60] Browne, *Literary History*, vol. 3, 494.

keep company with "the sultan." This upsets al-Baghdādī at the time but he reveals that this was a test given to him by his shaykh and that after passing this trial Kubrā returned to treating al-Baghdādī with gentleness and kindness.[61] Al-Baghdādī uses this example to stress the need to obey the shaykh even if it is displeasing. Kubrā here knew what his student required at the time to progress spiritually, and throughout the *Tuḥfa,* al-Baghdādī only speaks of Kubrā with reverence.

Another area of potential tension between the two is revealed in a letter from al-Baghdādī to a certain Sharaf al-Dīn al-Balkhī in which al-Baghdādī analyses four of al-Balkhī's dreams. In one of the dreams al-Baghdādī appears to al-Balkhī with black or dirty palms. Al-Baghdādī interprets this as a mild reproach for his own shortcomings but goes on to say that he himself had similarly reproached Kubrā for four faults and that Kubrā had been pleased that al-Baghdādī only learned of four.[62] This is perhaps the closest we can come to a criticism of Kubrā in al-Baghdādī's own words, yet it is clear that this is not a criticism at all. Fritz Meier notes in commenting on this letter that, "Modestly admitting one's actual shortcomings far exceed the amount which has been exposed to view has long been a virtue of a shaykh conscious of his sins."[63] The comment then could be seen to portray Kubrā as an equally humble shaykh, al-Baghdādī's is therefore likely to be half praising Kubrā for his humility here.

Furthermore, it seems that al-Baghdādī's role had been increasingly elevated to a similar status to Kubrā's by some of the most important Kubrawī figures, as seen in al-Rāzī's *Mirṣād.* In one manuscript of al-Rāzī's *Baḥr al-ḥaqā'iq,* it is stated that al-Rāzī took his *ṭarīqa* and *ijāza* from al-Baghdādī while Kubrā was his shaykh of *ṣuḥba,* or companionship, a more informal relationship.[64] In addition, the *Khirqa hazārmīkhī*

[61] Al-Baghdādī, *Tuḥfat al-barara,* 30.
[62] Meier, 'An Exchange of Letters', 256.
[63] Meier, 'An Exchange of Letters', 265.
[64] Shpall, 'A Note on Najm al-Dīn al-Rāzī', 71-72.

emphasises the role of al-Baghdādī in training ʻAlī Lālā.[65] It is through al-Baghdādī that the Kubrawī line continues to Isfrā'inī and then to al-Simnānī. Al-Simnānī who proclaimed al-Baghdādī's *Tuḥfat al-barara* required reading, often expresses great reverence for him in his works.[66] For example, he recounts a vision where the great Sufi master al-Bisṭāmī takes the form of Jupiter and al-Baghdādī takes the form of the sun, superseding Bisṭāmī.[67] Landolt has also posited that it was al-Baghdādī who attracted al-Simnānī to Kubrawī Sufism.[68]

Here, al-Baghdādī is presented as a rather eminent shaykh of his time whose influence may have been comparable to Kubrā's, at least in the minds of the prominent Kubrāwī disciples who were essential in the survival of the order and the spread of its ideas. In light of this, it seems natural that later Sufis would try to understand how the two shaykhs relate to each other and attempt to establish a chain of succession which establishes a clear sequence from Kubrā to al-Baghdādī to Lālā. The matter is further complicated by al-Baghdādī's death occurring prior to Kubrā's. It may be the case then that there was a need to emphasise Kubrā over al-Baghdādī or to dissociate them slightly and stem the reverence for al-Baghdādī found in al-Rāzī and al-Simnānī's writings which diverted attention away from the supposed founder of the order.

As stated, the explicit establishment of a Kubrawī order occurs with al-Hamadānī who traced his chain of initiation from al-Simnānī, through Isfaraʻinī, through Lālā, to al-Baghdādī and then Kubrā.[69] During Kubrā and al-Baghdādī's time however, the Kubrawī community is less coherently structured. There were a number of shaykhs operating in Iran and Transoxania at the time, and figures such as ʻAlī Lālā acquired certificates of

[65] Deweese, 'Two Narratives', 339.
[66] Elias, *The Throne Carrier,* 130.
[67] Corbin, *Visionary Recital*, 244.
[68] Landolt, 'Simnānī', 97.
[69] Deweese, 'The Eclipse', 40.

completion and instruction from non-Kubrawī teachers as well as Kubrā and al-Baghdādī.[70] Both al-Rāzī and Lālā received some training from Kubrā and al-Baghdādī.[71] And while al-Baghdādī was Kubrā's disciple, he had his own *khānqa* (Sufi lodge) trained disciples on his own and functioned independently from his shaykh in his later years.

In one letter al-Baghdādī does mention the appointment of a *Khādim* (superintendent) by Kubrā to a lodge in Khurasan which may suggest that Kubrā did have some authority in lodges outside of his own.[72] Yet, the content of al-Baghdādī's letters and writings which we have discussed signify that he had his own lodge, issued his own initiatory certificates and invested disciples with a cloak himself, and that some of those who were under his tutelage viewed him as their most influential teacher. Such a loosely structured past may have undermined the identity of the later Kubrawī order which saw Kubrā as its founder and the ultimate authority of his day. The desire to conceive of a structured school in accordance with the chain of initiatic authority with al-Baghdādī subordinated to Kubrā is understandable and seems to have been projected back into history by later Sufis.

This is one possible explanation for the story of a rift between the two, however later Sufi rivalries may also have contributed to this narrative. Deweese has demonstrated that competing Sufi claims over lineage in the 15th and 16th centuries, stating that later Sufis who traced their spiritual lineages back to contemporaries of Kubrā and al-Baghdādī could have sought to discredit the Kubrawīs, obscuring their role in 'Alī Lālā's Sufi training.[73] During Jāmī's time, in the 15th and 16th centuries, there was increasing tension between Sufi communities which were transitioning from less formal institutions to Sufi orders. These emerging orders derived legitimacy through clearly

[70] Deweese, 'Two Narratives', 319.
[71] Karbalā'ī, *Rawḍāt al-jinān,* vol. 2, 306-308.
[72] Deweese, 'Two Narratives', 312.
[73] Deweese, 'Two Narratives', 317.

defined chains of spiritual teaching. Excluding or de-emphasising some figures in favour of others therefore undermined the legitimacy of certain groups. Deweese highlights the existence of hagiographical works which deemphasise Kubrā in favour of a shaykh by the name of Ḍiyā' al-Dīn al-Ḥātamī in 'Alī Lālā's Sufi lineage. These were copied and reproduced during Jāmī's time.[74] These motivations may have found their way into Jāmī's entry on al-Baghdādī as Sufi groups who viewed their traditions as indebted to Ḍiyā' al-Dīn through Lālā may have attempted to diminish the importance of the Kubrāwiyya.

In order to examine the hagiographical tensions further discuss al-Baghdādī's death must be discussed in more detail. The peculiar account of al-Baghdādī's death in Jāmī's work in the context of competing hagiographical claims allows us to dismiss this supposed rift between al-Baghdādī and Kubrā. However, while it is likely that these stories indicate rivalries that were projected back into Kubrawī history in a context of competing Sufi orders, it would be incorrect to assume a perfect harmony amongst the first generation of Kubrawīs. In light of the evidence of al-Baghdādī and his students' antipathy towards Sa'd al-Dīn and his son, Ṣadr al-Dīn Ḥamū'ī, both of whom were prominent Kubrawīs.[75] This goes to the heart of the subject of al-Baghdādī's death as we posit that the execution of al-Baghdādī was due to political tensions which involved court officials belonging to the Ḥāmū'ī family, these were the cousins of Sa'd al-Dīn al-Ḥāmū'ī. This political tension which dates back to al-Baghdādī's time also complicates the succession of Kubrā's authority and seems to have had a lasting impact on Kubrawī lineage. In positing a break between al-Baghdādī and Kubrā, the hagiography touches on a tension in al-Baghdādī's lifetime, as well as later anxieties over the succession of Kubrawī authority. In addition, the story of Kubrā and al-Baghdādī's estrangement serves as an intersection of older rivalries, as well as rivalries current to Jāmī's time.

[74] Deweese, 'Two Narratives', 301.

[75] Elias, 'The Sufi Lords', 75.

4. Al-Baghdādī's death

It is obvious that al-Baghdādī was a prominent shaykh whose role as leader of a Sufi institution would be greatly influential, and therefore worthy of patronage from the political class. Ever since the waning of Abbasid power, new Muslim rulers sought legitimation by patronising religious institutions such as the *madrasa* and *khānqa.* In addition to al-Baghdādī, other Sufis also had influence at court and even at this earlier time, before the rise of Sufi orders, competition between Sufis did exist, expecially in times of political fragmentation. Al-Baghdādī seems to have been caught up in a struggle which involved the Khwarazmshah and the influential Ḥamū'ī family on one side and the Queen mother on the other. Towards the beginning of his letter to Lālā, al-Baghdādī tells us that the accusations intended to tarnish his image had arisen from the "sons of Ḥamū'ī."[76] This frames the entire letter as a response to a number of accusations levelled against al-Baghdādī by these figures.

This refers to the cousins of the contemporaneous shaykh Sa'd al-Dīn Ḥamū'ī, another one of Kubrā's students. All four of his uncle's sons worked for the Khwarazmian state at the time.[77] This seems to be the origin of the tension within the Kubrawī order which emerges in Jāmī's hagiography, and the reason behind his inclusion of the story of al-Baghdādī and Kubrā's estrangement in the *Nafaḥāt.* This becomes obvious as Jāmī places Sa'd al-Dīn as the mediator between the two who works tirelessly to bring about their reconciliation.[78] The result is that the hagiography casts Sa'd al-Dīn in a much more favourable light, portraying him as a friend of both al-Baghdādī and Kubrā.

[76] Al-Baghdādī, *Khirqa Hazārmīkhī,* 170.
[77] Elias, 'The Sufi Lords', 75.
[78] Jāmī, *Nafahāt al-uns,* 489.

In truth, Sa‘d al-Dīn was shunned by those disciples who were close to al-Baghdādī. Al-Simnānī never mentions any of the Ḥamū’īs, including the prominent Ṣadr al-Dīn Ḥamū’ī, Sa‘d al-Dīn’s son who presided over the conversion of the Mongol ruler Ghāzān during al-Simnānī’s lifetime.[79] This is incredibly odd given both al-Simnānī’s prolific writings and the fact that he too was well acquainted with the Mongol court, mentioning interactions with the Mongol rulers without ever mentioning Ṣadr al-Dīn. In addition, Lālā’s disciple Jurfānī refused to see Sa‘d al-Dīn and refused to accept an *ijāza* from him.[80] The Ḥamū’īs were subsequently ostracised from the main *silsila* of the Kubrawīs who would later trace their spiritual lineage to Kubrā via al-Baghdādī, through al-Simnānī, Isfarā’inī and Lālā. Deweese also mentions that Sa‘d al-Dīn could have been an associate the shaykh Ḍiyā’ al-Dīn through ‘Imām ʿAlā’ al-Dīn ʿUmar b. Muḥammad b. Ḥākim Arghiyānī’.[81] This is telling since the hagiographies that surround Lālā and Ḍiyā’ al-Dīn attempt to displace Kubrā’s and al-Baghdādī’s roles in training Lālā in favour of Ḍiyā’ al-Dīn. This indicates that some Sufi groups attempted to associate Lālā’s allegiance to Ḍiyā’ al-Dīn and Sa‘d al-Dīn Ḥāmū’ī instead of Kubrā and al-Baghdādī.

This elucidates the true motive behind the narrative of a rupture between al-Baghdādī and Kubrā found in Jāmī’s *Nafaḥāt*. It can be read as an attempt to reconcile all the prominent early figures of the Kubrawī order in light of the ostracisation of Sa‘d al-Dīn and his son Ṣadr al-Dīn from the main Kubrawī chain of authority. Or we could posit a tradition more hostile to al-Baghdādī which sought to establish Sa‘d al-Dīn as the true heir of the Kubrawī spiritual chain of authority. If this were the case, the account could have its origins in traditions of other Sufi groups which saw themselves as connected to Sa‘d al-Dīn and Lālā. Given the overly negative image of the Ḥamū’ī family (and by

[79] Deweese, ‘The Eclipse’, 47.

[80] Elias, ‘The Sufi Lords’, 75.

[81] Deweese, ‘Two Narratives’, 306-307.

implication Sa'd al-Dīn) which emerges in al-Baghdādī's own words, in addition to their shunning by Lālā's disciple as well as al-Simnānī, it is difficult not to see this tension between the spiritual descendants of al-Baghdādī and Ḥāmū'ī continuing for some generations.[82] Hence, it can also be seen as a negation of al-Baghdādī's role within the order since Sa'd al-Dīn emerges as the closest figure to Kubrā in this hagiography. This would certainly favour an interpretation of the Ḥamū'īs as the rightful heirs of Kubrā's legacy, displacing the role of al-Baghdādī in Lālā's training. Such readings of Jāmī's account have not been sufficiently highlighted.

While Elias does acknowledge that tension between al-Baghdādī and Sa'd al-Dīn existed, he seems to accept the version of events presented in Jāmī, stating that Sa'd al-Dīn did intercede with Kubrā on al-Baghdādī's behalf, and states that his status amongst Kubrawīs changed with later Kubrawīs rather than amongst the first generations.[83] In order to agree with such a reading, we must firstly assume the story of Kubrā and al-Baghdādī's estrangement is true, which seems untenable. We must also assume that al-Baghdādī's critical view of the the Ḥāmū'īs did not last despite the obvious distress he reveals in his letter.

Secondly, the story must be placed at an earlier date in al-Baghdādī's life in contradiction to what appears to be Jāmī's attempt to show Kubrā's utterance that al-Baghdādī should die in a river as a sign of irrevocable clairvoyance, foreseeing al-Baghdādī's execution by drowning. Jāmī clearly suggests the estrangement as having taken place later in al-Baghdādī's life as Kubrā's pronouncement results in al-Baghdādī's execution. Furthermore Elias asserts that Sa'd al-Dīn and al-Baghdādī were both commanded by Kubrā to leave Khwarazm in the face of the Mongol onslaught in

[82] Elias, 'The Sufi Lords', 75.

[83] Elias, 'The Sufi Lords', 73.

order to show that Sa'd al-Dīn was not viewed unfavourably in this early generation.[84] Yet this seems impossible since al-Baghdādī's death occurs (616/1219) earlier than the Mongol invasion of Khwarazm of 618/1220-1221 in which Kubrā was martyred.

Therefore Elias is too swift to overlook the political tension between al-Baghdādī and the Ḥamū'ī family and does not question Jāmī's hagiography and that the two had reconciled towards the end of al-Baghdādī's life is taken as a given. Instead, Elias focuses on Sa'd al-Dīn's reputation for heterodoxy amongst later Kubrawīs as a reason for his ostracisation from the Kubrawī school. However, this does not seem to be an adequate explanation. In positing that the ostracisation of the Ḥamū'īs from the Kubrawī chain was due to their propensity towards heterodox teachings, Elias emphasises *ḥurūfī* teachings and Shiite piety which opposed the "normative teachings" of al-Baghdādī and Lālā.[85] However, it remains difficult to substantiate this since no early Kubrawī writings seem to specify these elements of Sa'd al-Dīn's teachings in order to point out heterodoxy. On the contrary, both these potential heterodoxies are seen quite clearly within Kubrā and al-Baghdādī's works. Kubrā's *Fawā'iḥ* contains some clearly *ḥurūfī* discussions, along with a number of diagrams reminiscent of astrological and geomantic or magical practices, which could be seen as heterodox.[86]

And as we will see in the chapter regarding the *khirqa,* al-Baghdādī traces the origins of the Sufi cloak and the authority of the Sufi chain to 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib and the Prophet's family, adopting a more Shiite-inclined position while arguing against 'Umar al-Suhrawardī's account of the origin of the *khirqa* as derived from Umm Salama. Al-Baghdādī also holds a number of unconventional views in the *Tuḥfa,* one being that the Sufi can hear the clear speech of God through mundane physical sounds, which seems

[84] Elias, *The Sufi Lords,* 73.

[85] Elias, *The Sufi Lords*, 74-75.

[86] Kubrā, *Fawa'iḥ,* 202; 239. Kubrā claims to have seen verses of the Qur'an written in the stars. The image here resembles a geomantic diagram.

to approach a type of prophecy.

In contrast, here we suggest that al-Baghdādī's rivalry with the Ḥamū'ī family be treated as one of the main reasons contributing to his death. This is enough to explain the reason for the estrangement between subsequent generations of Kubrawīs and Ḥamū'īs as a number of prominent Kubrawīs saw themselves as the spiritual heirs of al-Baghdādī. Hence, the best explanation of Sa'd al-Dīn estrangement is a political struggle between al-Baghdādī and the Ḥamū'ī family, as evinced by al-Baghdādī's letter to Lālā. Elias identifies the "sons of Ḥamū'ī" that al-Baghdādī refers to as Sa'd al-Dīn's cousins (through his uncle and teacher Ṣadr al-Dīn Muḥammad), as 'Imād al-Dīn Abu'l Fatḥ 'Umar (d. 636/1238-9), Fakhr al-Dīn Yūsuf (d. 647/1250) who worked in bureaucracy, and Kamāl al-Dīn Abu'l-'Abbās Aḥmad (d. 646/1248) and Mu'īn al-Dīn Abu 'Alī al-Ḥasan (d. 643/1246) who worked in the military.[87]

In the letter, al-Baghdādī reveals in his complaints to Lālā, two main accusations which seem to have arisen from the Ḥāmū'īs. The first is the accusation of illicit relations with a princess, to which al-Baghdādī replies that he was in fact secretly married to her. Connected to this are a number of accusations which question his character, and we see al-Baghdādī defend himself by citing prophetic narrations that writing love poetry, and seeking pleasure and amusement with one's wife are all licit activities. The second accusation is only hinted at as al-Baghdādī's moves on to assure Lālā that the money received through endowments should not be improperly used.

It seems that he may have been accused of financial mismanagement since he begins by declaring it unlawful to consume the property of a charitable endowment.[88] The emphasis on al-Baghdādī's finances is alluded to in some biographical accounts which

[87] Jamal Elias, 'The Sufi Lords', 75.

[88] Al-Baghdādī, *Khirqa Hazārmikhī,* 170-173.

assert that there was no richer Sufi lodge in the land, and that al-Baghdādī had one thousand dinars worth of property in endowments and spent two hundred thousand dinars a year.[89] As the *shaykh al-shuyūkh,* al-Baghdādī would have overseen the running of substantial land and property and the revenues which flowed into and out of the lodge. With his marriage into the ruling classes, such a position must have accorded him great influence.

It is clear that relations between the religious classes and the state had soured under 'Alā' al-Dīn Khwarazmshah. We have also seen that the Shah's mother had attempted to undermine her son and rule independently of him. Al-Baghdādī's marriage with the blessing of Turkan Khatūn seems to indicate his alignment to the Queen mother. In addition, his insistence in his letter to Lālā that he wished to leave Nishapur and the corruption of the officials there for Khwarazm indicates a desire to return to the territory where the Queen mother held sway.

Al-Baghdādī seems desperate to leave Nishapur as he tells Lālā that he wished to leave for the pilgrimage that year but the Queen mother refused to grant him permission.[90] Hence, the Queen mother seems to have either been fond of him or found in him a useful political ally. Al-Juwaynī reveals that Turkān Khatūn had acted in a similar way with another political marriage alliance, claiming that Turkan would not allow Sultan 'Uthmān to leave Khwarazm and return to his capital due to the "custom of the Turks."[91] Al-Juwaynī says that it was their custom that the newly-wed son in law remain with his wife's family for a year after a marriage.[92]

Al-Juwaynī states that after 'Uthmān returned to his capital of Samarqand, he began to

[89] See al-Riyāhī's Introduction to al-Rāzī's *Mirṣād*, 42.
[90] Al-Baghdādī, *Khirqa Hazārmīkhī*, 173.
[91] Turkan Khatūn belonged to the Qanglī Turkic tribe.
[92] Al-Juwaynī, *The World Conqueror*, 394.

plot against the Sultan, it is therefore possible that the Queen mother had invoked the custom of her tribe for political ends. On another occasion, we see Turkan Khatūn advising a relative of hers, Kozlī, who unsuccessfully revolted against the Khwarazmshah to adopt Sufi dress and practice and take up residence near Tekish's grave. This however, was not a successful plan as 'Alā' al-Dīn had him executed upon his return to Khwarazm.[93] While al-Juwaynī gives us no direct information on al-Baghdādī's death, the behaviour of the Queen mother is paralleld in al-Baghdādī's letters, indicating his attachment to her.

Therefore, while we may never know exactly why al-Baghdādī was killed, we may posit here that he was seen as an ally to the Queen mother who was constantly vying for power against her son 'Alā' al-Dīn Khwarazmshah. His death fits into a broader trend of alienation of religious classes under the rule of 'Alā' al-Dīn. This was probably due to the disruption and competition over patronage relations which accompanied the fractured state of the Shah and political rivalries. And in this context, his execution just a year before the Mongol invasions is perhaps an indication of the anxiety and desperation of the Khwarazmshah in attempting to assert his control.

From this discussion of al-Baghdādī's life and death we are given an insight into his intellectual and political significance. This analysis is important for understanding the context in which the *Tuḥfa* was written. The information we have gleaned here sheds light on al-Baghdādī's animosity towards rulers which is revealed in various passages of the *Tuḥfa.* Furthermore it is important to attain a sense of al-Baghdādī's significance within the early Kubrawī community in order to better understand the influence he would have had on the development of Kubrawī thought and practice. This is not to say that al-Baghdādī's position should be emphasised above that of Kubrā's, but it is evident

[93] Al-Juwaynī, *The History of the World Conqueror*, 339.

that some of the most prolific Kubrawīs such as al-Rāzī and al-Simnānī, as well as the most active Sufi figures and practitioners such as Lālā, viewed al-Baghdādī as a great master. His contribution to the development of Kubrawī thought, institutionalisation, and more generally to Sufism as a whole, should not be overlooked.

5. The text of the *Tuḥfa*

Before advancing in our study, we must discuss the text of al-Baghdādī's *Tuḥfa* in more detail. This is relevant here as the ten questions put to al-Baghdādī reveal important information regarding the concerns surrounding Sufism at the time. Al-Baghdādī states in the introduction to the text that he wrote the *Tuḥfa* after a number of his "devoted brothers" had asked him to do so and states that the answers arranged in these ten chapters encompass "most of what the student needs to know" regarding the Sufi path.[94] Some manuscripts of the *Tuḥfa* which include an introduction by the scribe identify the questioner as Aḥmad 'Alī al-Muhadhib ibn Naṣr al-Khuwārī who is described as one of al-Baghdādī's disciples.[95]

Not much is known about al-Khuwārī, however he must have been one of al-Baghdādī's more prominent disciples. He is quoted in a manuscript of Farīd al-Dīn 'Aṭṭār's *Tadhkirat al-Awliyā'*, lamenting over al-Baghdādī's execution.[96] In Yāqūt al-Ḥamawī's (d. 626/1229) *Mu'jam al-buldān,* two towns named Khuwār are mentioned, one near Rayy and another near Nishapur and Bayhaq. However, al-Ḥamawī states that the former was by his time mostly ruined. Hence al-Khuwārī most probably hails from the latter.[97]

[94] Al-Baghdādī, *Tuḥfat al-barara,* 1.

[95] See *Tuḥfat al-barara,* MS Tehran, Sepahsalar 598 (2) f 97.

[96] Landolt, 'Sufism and Ismailism', 10.

[97] Al-Ḥamawī, *Mu'jam al-buldān*, vol. 2, 370.

Abū Sa'd al-Sam'ānī (d. 562/1166) equates Bayhaq with Khuwār and states that this town produced a number of prominent scholars. A certain Abū Muḥammad 'Abd al-Jabbār ibn Muḥammad al-Khuwārī (d. 534/1139) is described as a great imam of Nishapur who was taught by the famous Sufi, al-Qushayrī, as well as the Ash'arī scholar, Abū Bakr al-Bayhaqī (d. 458/1080). His brother, Abū 'Alī ibn 'Abd al-Ḥamīd ibn Muḥammad al-Khuwārī (d. 533-534/1138-1139) also seems to have been a Sufi, as he is described as a *ḥākim,* and was also taught by al-Bayhaqī and al-Qushayrī. Hence, it is likely that al-Khuwārī came from a family with historic connections to the intellectual traditions of Nishapur.[98]

Al-Baghdādī also spent some significant time in Nishapur where he faced a number of political challenges. Given Nishapur's tumultuous history during the reign of the Khwarazmshahs, the questions put to al-Baghdādī tell us a lot about the history of Sufism in a period of political disruption. These ten questions of the *Tuḥfa* are as follows:

> 1. What is [the shaykh's] opinion with regard to the etiquette (*ādāb*) of the Sufis in the generality of their conditions and behaviours?
>
> 2. Regarding the appearance of the Sufis, their shaving of the head, shortening of their clothes and wearing blue. Are these conditions necessary for undertaking the path? Or is it possible for the wayfarer not to adhere to this [appearance] and not to adorn himself in their style, but remain according to his own appearance [even if a change in appearance] is a guard for his [spiritual] condition against confusion and attracting people to him?
>
> 3. What does [the shaykh] say with regard to the definition of shaykh-hood and its reality, and the point at which one qualifies for this position? And what is required of

[98] Al-Sam'ānī, *Kitāb al-ansāb,* vol. 5, 215-216.

[the shaykh] in the training of his disciples from beginning to end, [with regard to] purifying and training them, and his conduct with regard to their conditions, selves, and speech?

4. What does [the shaykh] say with regard to the definition of discipleship and its reality, and of the requirement for the disciple to be guided by a shaykh, and the rules which the disciple is obliged to fulfil from beginning to end, and the rights of the shaykh [over him]? And must he obey [the shaykh's] orders, even if they defy the prima facie religious law as well as good judgement, whether it be [regarding] an obligatory or forbidden [action].

5. How is the practice of seclusion, solitude, and withdrawal from people performed? And what are the appropriate remembrance (*dhikr*) formulas one should perform? And is it necessary for him to fast and forgo [certain] permissible foods and clothes? And does it harm him to busy himself with the religious sciences, in reading, writing, and reciting the Qur'an?

6. How does one distinguish truth from falsehood regarding what enters one's chest and is impressed upon one's mind in visions and spiritual conditions? Answering this question necessitates analysing thought impressions and distinguishing them from one another. As well as analysing visions and distinguishing the imagined, which has no benefit, from the truth, which is from the perceptions of the heart and the spirit.

7. Regarding the cloak which the Sufis receive from their shaykhs and from which they attain blessings, what is its origin, lineage, and purpose? And is its significance overstated [by Sufis]? And when is the disciple qualified to wear it?

8. If [the disciple] reaches the lofty stage, and matures to the highest terminus, and achieves visions and the unveiling of the realities, and all the intricacies are made clear to him, is it possible for him to [consider himself] pardoned from obligations and

austerities? And is it possible for him to ascertain that, after all his spiritual exercises and struggles, he attains a condition wherein he is [free from being ordered] and reproached?

9. If [the disciple] experiences the likes of [what was described in the 8th question], time and time again, is it permissible for him to disregard his obligations and diverge from religious requirements. And if he is commanded [through a vision] to sin, or to forgo a religious requirement, should he adhere to the law or perform what he has seen [in the vision] and beseech God [for guidance].

10. Regarding approaching the doors of Sultans and mixing with cursed oppressors, does this reduce his [spiritual] standing or is it permissible for the completed and mature to become more relaxed and expansive in keeping company with people, both the common and elite, without [allowing] the initiate and intermediate [to do so]? And what is expected in the completion of his love and vigilance in guiding [the people to God], and the triumph of God? And what follows this answer is a section on the origin of audition and its nature, and [a response to] those who curse it and diminish it, or [those who rely too much] on seeking rewards from the hereafter and the present [through it].[99]

Al-Baghdādī states in the introduction to the text that at first he considered collecting his sermons and lectures in a book entitled *Zubdat al-'awālī wa-ḥilyat al-amālī,* but that this seemed a vanity to him and he decided to structure the book as a series of questions and answers put to him by his disciples instead.[100] It is important to note that given that the *Tuḥfa* is a response to ten questions put to al-Baghdādī by al-Khuwārī, the structure of the text is to a large extent determined by the questioner rather than the author.

[99] Al-Baghdādī, *Tuḥfat al-barara,* 1; 3; 5; 8; 16; 25; 28; 33; 36; 40.
[100] Al-Baghdādī, *Tuḥfat al-barara,* 1.

Despite this seemingly arbitrary structure, there are some overarching concerns in the ten questions which offer al-Baghdādī the opportunity to craft a more systematic work. While each chapter of the *Tuḥfa* focuses on some aspect of Sufi practice, al-Baghdādī intertwines his answers with significant theoretical discussions. Passages which are intended to explain the origins of Sufi practices and ideal Sufi behaviour are interwoven with psychological expositions. This allows for some degree of structure in the text. For example, al-Baghdādī establishes the framework of his psychology in the 3rd chapter, which allows him to discuss the production of dreams and visions more fully in the 6th chapter.

The questions themselves tell us much about Sufism and wider society in this period. Clearly, one of the most pertinent questions in the text centres on defining the qualifications and etiquttes of shaykh-hood, determining the extent of his authority, as almost every chapter in some way touches upon this subject. As will be shown, the significance of these discussions is to increasingly centralise the authority of the shaykh. Providing a definition of shaykh-hood and developing the notion of the Sufi cloak as a marker of this vocation had important consequences for the transition of Sufi communities into orders. This reassured the authority of the Sufi community and asserted its identity and self-governance. Furthermore, the subject of shaykh-disciple etiquette remained an important topic of exposition in the works of later Kubrawī thinkers. Isfarā'inī also wrote on this topic and his son produced a copy of the *Tuḥfa* in the year 791/1388.[101] Hence, al-Baghdādī's thought was clearly relevant within Kubrawī circles for a number of subsequent generations.

Another recurring concern regards dispensation from Sufi practice and the religious law, discussions of which are seen in chapters three, four, eight and nine. The question of dispensation is related to a number of concerns during this period. The most obvious

[101] See Landolt's introduction to *Kāshif al-asrār*, 55.

tension here is that the conceptions of spiritual completion in Kubrawī thought whereby the shaykh comes to manifest the attributes of God, seems to allow dispensing with the religious law and Sufi practice. Hence, these questions require some extensive theoretical expositions in al-Baghdādī's answers. The topic of dispensation is also relevant to the rise of antinomian groups in this period of history. Hence, these questions attempt to distinguish correct forms of Sufi behaviour.

The questions also highlight the rise of distinct Sufi identities. The title of the *Tuḥfa* seems to reference one of 'Umar al-Suhrawardī's works entitled "Answers to the questions of some of the religious scholars of Khurasan." In this work he discusses the topic of investiture, the origins of the Sufi cloak, and whether the Sufi may maintain his societal obligations such as work and marriage.[102] These questions regarding the usage of the Sufi cloak and the appropriateness of mixing with the wider populace are mirrored in al-Baghdādī's text and were clearly an area of concern for Sufis at the time.

Al-Baghdādī explicitly disagrees with and responds to al-Suhrawardī's discussion of investiture in his 7th chapter. That similar questions were put to al-Baghdādī indicates the need to produce a Kubrawī response to al-Suhrawardī's systematised Sufism which argued for practices and theories that diverged from those espoused by the early Kubrawīs. The questions therefore indicate the emergence of a distinct Sufi community which needed to clarify its theoretical framework and communal structure in opposition to subversive mystical groups and other Sufi communities.

The questions put to al-Baghdādī are evidence of emerging tensions in this period. These are not only confined to tensions between Sufi theory and the potential to dispense with the law, but also between the exclusivist and elitist notions of Sufism and its increasing popularity within Muslim society. Questions regarding dress and marking

[102] Ohlander, *Sufism*, 227.

oneself out from wider society recur in questions two, five, seven and ten. The 10th question in particular displays this tension explicitly. Hence, the questioner asks how to balance interactions with the "cursed" and the "oppressors" while also calling people to God.

Furthermore, the questions also reveal a genuine interest in Sufi theory. Hence, the 6th question requires a detailed explanation of Kubrawī oneirology. This indicates the increasing complexity of Sufi thought which is important for understanding the reception of new ideas and doctrines which were absorbed through al-Ghazālī's into Kubrawī Sufism. That al-Baghdādī attempts to further develop Kubrā's thought into a more coherent system is not simply a coincidence; rather it is one of the aims of writing the text as it informs the answers to the ten questions. This attests to the relevance of the systematisation of Sufi theory to the institutional changes which were occurring within Sufi communities in this period. Having detailed the setting of our investigation, we may now turn to analysing al-Baghdādī's thought.

Chapter 2

Psychology

This chapter sets out to provide an outline and analysis of al-Baghdādī's psychological theory, a necessary step towards addressing the questions and achieving the aims we have set in this study. This will account for the basis of al-Baghdādī's theoretical framework and detail how his ideas of knowledge and perception are built upon it. Here it will be shown that al-Baghdādī systematises Kubrā's work, constructing a clearer more stratified psychological theory, and offering more detailed discussions of some important ideas found in Kubrā's thought. This will clairfy the theoretical basis of some defining features in Kubrā's work such as his accounts of visions, dreams and coloured lights. Hence, the *Tuḥfa* is evidence of a highly stratified and coherent system of thought which was present even in this first generation of Kubrawī thinkers.

We begin by charting al-Baghdādī's account of the progression of man from a being furthest removed from God, to becoming the locus for the manifestation of God's divine attributes. First we will outline al-Baghdādī's cosmology and his articulation of the parallel micro-cosmology of the human body and soul since this provides the framework of his psychology. This is the basis from which to move on to detail his theory of dreams and visions and perception of the physical world. This is also important for revealing the emergence of a coherent, highly systematised dream theory (oneirology) in al-Baghdādī's work which has not been sufficiently explained in studies regarding the Kubrawiyya. It will be seen here that al-Baghdādī's work is worthy of study in its own right as it is evidence of the reception and development of philosophical and theological concepts found in al-Ghazālī and Avicenna in Kubrawī Sufism. We will also highlight the influence of important Sufi figures such as al-Qushayrī, ʻAmmār al-Bidlīsī and Abū Saʻīd ibn Abī al-Khayr on al-Baghdādī's thought.

This will chapter will also reveal the extent to which al-Baghdādī's systematisation of Kubrā's thought influenced later authors and thinkers such as Najm al-Dīn al-Rāzī and 'Alā' al-Dawla al-Simnānī.

This provides the basis for an analysis of the relationship between Kubrawī thought and practice which is central for the emergence of Kubrawī Sufism, since these theories are inseparable from the communal and institutional structures al-Baghdādī develops in the *Tuḥfa* which provide the community with its distinctive identity. This systematisation of Kubrawī psychology determines the shaykh's authority and the centralisation of the community around him. It also governs the practice of investiture and affiliation to the Sufi community, as well as the notion of dispensation from religious obligations and responses to antinomianism.

1. The composition of man

One of the most important features of al-Baghdādī's psychological theory is its dependence on a cosmological framework. This affords a more detailed explanation of the relationship between the soul and body, and hence the production of visions and dreams than we would otherwise realise by relying on Kubrā's work alone. Al-Baghdādī's cosmology details a hierarchy from the most bodily complex to the simplest of existents where the former is furthest removed from perfection while the latter is closest to it. This hierarchy of beings is then reflected in man's own composition and his experiences and behaviours are made to correspond to this cosmological framework. Man's baser behaviours stem from his bodily nature which he shares with other bodily existents, while his nobler nature is realised after subduing these bodily characteristics. This framework is crucial for providing us with al-Baghdādī's understanding of Kubrā's thought which is less structured by comparison.

Kubrā's *Fawā'iḥ* is noted for its discussions of visions which the Sufi experiences in his progression along the path. It describes fantastic scenes of demons, flights over various landscapes, and perceptions of coloured lights. It is autobiographical in parts and does not fully explain the mechanisms involved in the production of visions, or the framework for interpreting these visions which at times must be inferred. Still, there are some prominent features of Kubrā's understanding of visions which we may grasp from his work. For Kubrā, visionary experiences manifest the degree of the soul's spiritual perfection, and they therefore function as diagnostic tools for understanding the state of the soul.[103] Sometimes this is presented in a rather literal fashion. For example Kubrā states in his *Fawā'iḥ*:

> Know that the ego, the devil, and the angel are not things external to you (*laysat ashyā' khārijatan 'anka),* but you are them (*bal anta humm*). Likewise [the celestial] heaven, earth and the seat [of God] (*al-kursī*)... They are but things within you (*innamā hiya ashyā' fīka),* and if you travel spiritually and become purified, you will see that clearly, God willing.[104]

Yet the precise meaning of such statements is not easily understood given the style of the *Fawā'iḥ*. Underlying such statements is the notion that is dependent upon the degree of the soul's perfection. The idea that the truth of perception and experience is only understood in accordance with the rank of the soul permeates Kubrā's work. In his treatise, *al-Uṣūl al-'ashra*, Kubrā explains that the experience of punishment in the afterlife is due to a person not severing themselves from their attachments to materiality in this life. Hence when a separation from materiality is forced upon him it is experienced as suffering, whereas the perfected soul which has cultivated this

[103] Izutsu, 'Theophanic Ego', 37.
[104] Kubrā, *Fawā'iḥ,* 171.

severance before death will perceive it as bliss.[105] The perception of this reality is dictated by the degree of purity that the soul achieves in its bodily life, as the same reality may be experienced and understood in different ways. How this notion relates to the experience of spiritual visions, or even physical sensations in this life remains only partly explained in Kubrā's writings and is given fuller exposition in the writings of al-Baghdādī.

Because of statements such as the above, Kubrā and his students have been described as espousing a type of idealism.[106] However, it is difficult to substantiate the suitability of such a term for describing Kubrawī thought. Al-Baghdādī and Kubrā do not account for the nature of the perceptible world, hence there is no attempt by them to put forward a theory of idealism. If we are to understand Kubrā's statements such as those above, turning to al-Baghdādī is crucial as he explains that the realities of the cosmos are present within the microcosmic composition of the human as a parallel to the macrocosm.

Hence if the Sufi receives a vision of a celestial heaven for example, he perceives both the external heaven alongside the reality of that heaven which is stored within him. These realities *(ḥaqā'iq)* that are present within man are not the external things themselves, but correspond to these external realities. They are revealed to the soul in ever-greater degrees of truth and are completely understood upon its perfection. Hence, understanding the true nature of a thing depends on understanding the corresponding realities which are stored within the human being, something that can only be achieved by purifying the soul through Sufi discipline.

[105] Zargar, 'The Ten Principles', 124.

[106] Mayer, 'Yogic-Sūfī Homologies', 274.

The nature of the existence of the world is a question that never arises here. Al-Baghdādī only discusses the ability to perceive truths from what the senses and the imagination present to the soul. For al-Baghdādī, one's ability to know anything is predicated on higher plains of cognition which are only achievable with purification of the soul from its lower faculties which obscure truth. The truth of one's understanding of his or her perceptions rises and falls in tandem with the perfection and denigration of the soul. This purification involves the individual coming to know the realities of the cosmos which are stored within him. Hence, there is a correspondence between the perception of the world and the human being's capacity for knowledge. We can come to a fuller understanding of Kubrā's assertions of these perceptions as things "within" man by analysing the composition of man in the *Tuḥfa*. Given its emphasis on cosmology and micro-cosmology as the framework for the perfection of the soul, the *Tuḥfa* provides an important exposition of Kubrawī epistemology.

1.i. Man as a microcosm: Body and soul

The notion of the human being as a reflection of the entire cosmos is not particular to al-Baghdādī or the Kubrawiyya. However, during al-Baghdādī's time, this notion of man's composition seems to have gained greater currency and become much more prominent. The conception of man as a microcosm is prevalent in the works of Sufi thinkers in this period such Ṣadr al-Dīn al-Qūnawī (d. 674/1274) the foremost disciple of Ibn 'Arabī, as well as 'Umar al-Suhrawardī. It also finds expression in the writings the Brethren of Purity (*ikhwān al-ṣafā*) and those of Afḍal al-Dīn Kashānī, and was associated with Arabic Hermeticism.

This concept also appears much earlier, in writings of Muslim thinkers who did not necessarily have an attachment to Sufism such as 'Amr ibn Baḥr al-Jāḥiẓ's (d. 255/869)

Kitāb al-ḥaywān. However, in all these cases, the way in which the cosmos was conceived of directly affected the way in which the composition of man was articulated. Therefore, although there is nothing new about Sufis drawing on this analogy, the way in which it is articulated must be understood if we are to capture the role of micro-cosmology in the development of al-Baghdādī's specific psychological theory.[107]

In the 3rd chapter of the *Tuḥfa,* detailing the rules of shaykh-hood, al-Baghdādī divides all created things into either belonging to the hidden (*ghayb)* or manifest (*shahāda)* worlds. The human being's composition however consists of all the realities of both realms. This is explained as a consequence of man's composition of a body and soul. Al-Baghdādī explains this in the following passages:

> God almighty created the worlds, and in their multitudes, they are restricted to two types, the hidden world and the manifest world. This is why God has said of Himself: "He is Allah, there is no divinity but He, knower of the hidden and manifest." So He described (Himself) as knower of the hidden and manifest in order to describe his perfect knowledge of all the existents, for there is no thing in creation except that it is either from the hidden world or the manifest world...
>
> [He] created the human as constructed from all the realities of the hidden and manifest. And God has said: "And I fashioned him and breathed into him from my spirit..." So the 'fashioning' is from the manifest and the 'breathing in of the spirit' is from the hidden. So there is no thing in the manifest that is not within the human's manifest-ness. And there is no thing in the hidden that is not within the human's hiddenness.[108]

Al-Baghdādī establishes from the outset that all the realities of existence are contained within the human being's composition. The sense of the term 'realities' here equates to

[107] Todd, *The Sufi Doctrine*, 2-6.

[108] Al-Baghdādī, *Tuḥfat al-barara,* 5-6.

the intelligibles and their forms. He explains this as being a result of the human's material and spiritual composition. Man's frame is the most complex bodily composition in manifest creation which means that it shares its faculties with all other bodily existents. Likewise, the soul as the greatest creation in the hidden world, shares its nature with all hidden existents. Al-Baghdādī explains that this is because man is nearest to God with respect to the soul and furthest from him with respect to the body:

> There is no thing in the world of bodies (*ajsām*) closer to the presence of Godliness than the Throne, because it is the place where the rule of mercy is bound. And from it the world of bodies arises, [first] the seven celestial spheres, and after them comes the ether (*al-athīr)* and fire, then air, then water, then earth, then the things which are composed of these elements which are the species of solids, plants and animals. So if you consider all the existents, you find that the furthest from the presence [of Godliness] in reality is the world of bodies. And if you consider the world of bodies as varieties of constructions from the different elements, of which man's bodily frame is [one such thing], [man's bodily frame] is the furthest from true correct standing. And so [man] is furthest from the true indivisible substances. So the image of the physical form of the human is the furthest composition from the presence [of Godliness] and he is in truth the lowest of the low.[109]

Many medieval thinkers shared similar cosmological systems albeit with some variations.[110] For al-Baghdādī, the emphasis in recounting this process of creation is placed on the progression of existents from simplicity to complexity. God's essence first emanates onto the cosmological throne which lies between the hidden and manifest. The notion of emanation was introduced by earlier thinkers to account for the way in which the multiplicity of God's attributes arises from his singular essence, without compromising his oneness. God then commands the manifest world, or world of bodies,

[109] Al-Baghdādī, *Tuḥfat al-barara,* 6.
[110] Heer, 'al-Rāzi and al-Ṭūsī', 112.

through the throne which lies between the hidden and manifest. Next in bodily complexity to the throne are the seven heavenly spheres. Creation on earth arises from this chain of events starting with the throne and moving through the heavenly spheres.

On the sphere of earth, the four elements of fire, air, water and earth combine to form existents. The natural state of the elements is to remain separate, however they can be forced to unite in order to produce more complex bodies. It was an accepted notion in philosophy that the soul forces the elements to combine and behave against their nature which was to remain seperate.[111] Hence, the increase in compositional complexity indicates further removal from the natural state of the elements and their "correct standing." Hence, bodies are composed of a combination of these elements, the more complex they are, the further removed they are from their simpler and seperate state. In order of increasing complexity these are, inanimate objects, plants, animals and finally humans. Man is therefore the most complex existent possessing human, animal, vegetative and mineral faculties. Al-Baghdādī concludes that it is for this reason that man's bodily frame was termed the "lowest of the low" in the Qur'an, while the soul was described by the holy text as having the highest standing in all creation. The body then presents the soul with a number of faculties from which it must be extracted in order to actualise its true nature.

This disparity between the soul and body testifies to the influence of philosophy over al-Baghdādī's thought. Al-Baghdādī's distinction between the body and the soul indicates his adherence to a dualistic notion of body and soul, an idea which has its origins with Avicenna.[112] For Avicenna, the soul is not dependent on the body and is capable of subsisting without it, the body is presented as simply the riding animal

[111] Stroumsa and Sviri, 'The Beginnings', 205; McGinnis, *Avicenna,* 88.
[112] Black, 'Psychology', 309-310.

which the soul mounts and commands.[113] In the Avicennan scheme, the vegetative state is marked by its functions such as growth and reproduction, this is below the animal state which adds animate functions such as movement and perception. Finally the human being is considered to be above the animal due to the power of intellection which is located in the soul and is independent of the body.[114] For al-Baghdādī the soul is also that which distinguishes the human from the animal. However, for al-Baghdādī it is the soul's ability to experience realities and access the greater exalted attributes of the spirit, as well as the divine attributes of God which confer this greater status upon it rather than intellection.

The influence of philosophy over al-Baghdādī's Sufism can be traced to al-Ghazālī's adoption of Avicennan ideas. Al-Baghdādī's cosmogony attests to the reception of body-soul dualism by reserving the soul from taking part in the descent of man which the body takes part in. Some scholars have asserted that al-Ghazālī argues against divorcing the soul from the body in his *Tahāfut* and that he should be considered a monist in this regard.[115] This is because the ability of the soul to subsist without the body favoured, but did not definitively lead to the conclusion of a non-bodily afterlife. Hence, in the *Tahāfut,* a largely polemical work, al-Ghazālī attempts to dissociate himself from the philosophical tradition and seems to argue against the subsistence of the soul without the body. However it has since been shown that al-Ghazālī ultimately adopted the Avicennan dualism of body and soul.[116]

That the dualistic account of body and soul found its way into Kubrawī thought is evident in Kubrā's *Uṣūl al-'ashra.* Translated as *The Ten Principles,* Kubrā here explains that each of these principles is intended to help the Sufi undergo a "death before

[113] Black, 'Mental Existence', 17.
[114] McGinnis, *Avicenna,* 96-100.
[115] Druart, 'Soul v. Body', 338.
[116] Treiger, *Inspired Knowledge,* 90-91.

death."[117] As we have discussed, this is in order to detach the soul from bodily concerns prior to the actual physical death so that the soul will not experience pain and suffering upon its forced detachment from the body.[118] The subsistence of the soul without the body upon death is an important premise which underpins the entirety of the work.

The notion of an imagined resurrection is also accommodated in other Kubrawī sources. Though it is not necessary to conclude from this that the Kubrawiyya denied the bodily resurrection, this attests to the influence of philosophy through al-Ghazālī's thought. While al-Ghazālī does not deny the bodily resurrection, he does seem to provide various eschatological options which would accommodate the dualistic account of body and soul. It has been pointed out that he does not deny the possibility that the soul could occupy a different body upon resurrection, or that the resurrection could be imaginal whereby the soul imagines bodily pleasures and pain in the afterlife. Imagination however requires a body, so al-Ghazālī hints that in this case the celestial bodies could serve as the medium for imagination. Al-Ghazālī also holds that abstracted intellectual pleasure will only be available for the most perfected souls.[119]

That these ideas concerning the soul's existence in the afterlife affected Kubrawī thought is seen in the *Tafsīr al-nujūm,* a Kubrawī exegesis of the Qur'an. The authorship of this work is unclear, having probably been co-written by Kubrā and Najm al-Dīn al-Rāzī, with some minor additions by al-Simnānī, however all three have intimate ties with al-Baghdādī's work.[120] At one point it is explained that in heaven the believers have wives who represent God's attributes of beauty and majesty through the imagination.[121] Here we see that the heavenly maidens are presented as part of an imagined world in

[117] Kubrā, *al-Uṣūl*, 125.
[118] Zargar, 'The Ten Principles', 123-124.
[119] Treiger, *Inspired Knowledge,* 91.
[120] Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions,* 254-255.
[121] See Ballanfat, 'Reality and Image'.

the afterlife, a metaphor to the reality in which the soul finds itself. The dualism of body and soul found its way into Kubrawī thought which seems comfortable in divorcing the soul from the body in a number of contexts. For example, in accommodating an imagined afterlife, though not necessarily precluding a bodily resurrection.

The dualistic account of the body and soul probably offered al-Ghazālī a more suitable model for his project of building an ethical system which required a coherent eschatological framework.[122] Al-Baghdādī's *Tuḥfa* is evidence that al-Ghazālī's thought was useful for later Sufis too. It provides al-Baghdādī with important conceptual and discursive tools. These are employed in al-Baghdādī's account of the soul and body, in addition to his stratification of Sufi thought and practice. At one point al-Baghdādī asserts that souls do not occupy space (*ghayr mutaḥayyiz makānī*), and that because of this the soul of the shaykh and disciple can meet and commune spiritually in dreams and visions.[123] This also seems to serve as the premise to a specific class of clairvoyant visions which depend on the underlying notion that the soul is not temporally bound. As such, it may perceive occurrances in the physical world which the body cannot. Hence, these ideas allow al-Baghdādī to develop a number of concepts further.

The duality of body and soul is highlighted in the above passages of the *Tuḥfa* as al-Baghdādī makes the point that in man God has brought together "the farthest of the far" and "the nearest of the near." Hence the soul is presented as being entrapped in the bodily world, and must be extracted from it. Al-Baghdādī's cosmology draws a sharp contrast between man's body and soul. The soul remains the direct breath of God, while the body is created through a drawn out cosmological process. Hence al-Baghdādī constructs a framework which describes the descent of man as occurring in the

[122] Shihadeh, 'Classical Ash'arī Anthropology', 475.

[123] Al-Baghdādī, *Tuḥfat al-barara,* 18.

macrocosm, while the ascent and return occurs in the microcosm, as the soul must be extracted from the faculties of the body. This provides an explanation to some of Kubrā's statement in the *Fawā'iḥ* such as the following:

> Existence is composed of four elements, all of which are shades of darkness, one covering the other… earth, water, fire, and air. You are beneath them all, with no chance for separation from them except by giving each its due: This is the rendering of the part to the whole, such that earthliness (*al-turābiyya*) takes the earth, wateriness (*al-mā'iyya*) takes the water, fieriness (*al-nāriyya*) takes the fire, and airiness (*al-hawā'iyya*) takes the air. When each has taken its share, you become separated from these burdens.[124]

Al-Baghdādī's micro-cosmological account of man's body elucidates what Kubrā means here. The soul must be extracted from the compounds that make up the body and exert an influence over the soul, obscuring its true nature. The importance of this parallel between man and cosmos is that man contains all the realities of creation within him. The complexity of the body means that it contains all the realities present in the manifest realm, while the soul contains the realities of the hidden realm. Hence, the *Tuḥfa* elucidates the meanings of such statements made by Kubrā.

1.ii. The faculties of the soul

Al-Baghdādī's understanding of man as a microcosm is developed further in order to explain the relationship between the body and the soul, which mimics the relationship between God and the cosmos. What is meant by the term 'soul' in this study is that non-bodily substance in its entirety which we have described as the counterpart to the body. In the *Tuḥfa* the soul is subdivided into faculties which account for its various

[124] Kubrā, *fawā'iḥ,* 128; Zargar, 'The ten principles', 120.

functions and ranks. Here al-Baghdādī presents us with four faculties of the human soul, which are the ego (*nafs),* spirit (*rūḥ*), heart (*qalb*) and innermost heart (*sirr*).

The term *nafs* can be used to refer to the soul or the self in its entirety, as al-Baghdādī does on occasion.[125] However the more technical usage of *nafs* refers to what we shall translate here as ego. This is because the term in the *Tuḥfa* refers to a soul which is dominated by its desire to seek material gain, pleasure and comfort. In al-Baghdādī's microcosmic scheme, it represents the lowest bodily faculties which may dominate the soul and must be tamed and disciplined like a riding animal.[126] It is subdivided by al-Baghdādī into a commanding ego (which commands the person to sin), a blaming ego (which regrets its sins) and a pacified ego. The latter state is often described by al-Baghdādī as the beginning stages of the heart, and indeed the pacified ego is described as turning into a heart in the *Tuḥfa.*[127]

However this is just one way in which the term heart (*qalb*) is used in the *Tuḥfa.* The term can also refer to a much more specific function as the spiritual organ which links man's soul and body, causing the body to behave in accordance with the soul. Crucially, it is also the locus of perception and knowledge. In this latter sense it is made equivalent to the rational soul of the philosophers which is also described as being able to grasp truths once man has overcome the lower faculties of the soul.

The spirit is antithetical to the commanding ego, it represents man's loftier nature. The spirit is associated with the term '*ubūdīyya,* or worship. Hence there is a tripartite conception of the soul's three general ranks of ego, heart and spirit in the *Tuḥfa.*[128] For al-Baghdādī, the dominance of the spirit over man's being is often associated with the

[125] Al-Baghdādī, *Tuḥfat al-barara,* 6.
[126] Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions,* 112-113.
[127] Al-Baghdādī, *Tuḥfat al-barara,* 2.
[128] Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions,* 191.

love of worship, seclusion and visions. The spirit therefore desires things of the hidden and immaterial (*ghayb*) and delights in acts of worship, seclusion and ecstatic states brought about by spiritual experiences. In the *Tuḥfa,* the term also refers to the soul's ability to perceive hidden truths or future events, as a type of spiritual sensory organ referencing its independence from the body. At times the term *rūḥ,* like *nafs* is also used to refer to the soul or self in the *Tuḥfa*. Therefore, just as with the terms *nafs* and *qalb,* al-Baghdādī's usage of *rūḥ* depends heavily on the context of the passage. When these terms are encountered in their more general sense, it will be necessary to translate *rūḥ* as 'soul' and *nafs* as 'self'.

Finally there is the *sirr,* or innermost heart. The *sirr* seems to have always had a connection to the heart in Sufism as its innermost part.[129] Like al-Baghdādī's usage of the term 'heart,' the innermost heart seems to refer to both a spiritual organ with a specific function as well as describing a specific rank of the soul. In the latter sense of the term, the innermost heart's rank seems to be placed above that of the spirit as al-Baghdādī explains that once one has passed the stage of the heart, he enters the "world of the spirit" (*'ālam al-rūḥāniyya*) which is associated with the spirit whereas in the penultimate stage of perfection he enters the enclosure of beauty and majesty which is associated with the innermost heart.[130] However, the term also refers to man's essence, indicating the indivisibility of the soul. It also fulfills a psycho-spiritual function by emanating the soul's essence onto the heart which then commands the body.

The heart (*qalb*) and innermost heart (*sirr*) are important terms which are developed further by al-Baghdādī into spiritual organs which command the body. Al-Baghdādī expands upon their functions through a cosmological allegory. In explaining the role of

[129] Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions,* 192.

[130] Al-Baghdādī, *Tuḥfat al-barara,* 3.

the heart and the innermost heart al-Baghdādī likens the heart to the cosmological throne of God (‘*arsh*) and the innermost heart to the seat (*kursī*). Al-Baghdādī explains:

> Just as God has created… an intermediary between the hidden and manifest, which is the throne, so has he created for man [an intermediary] between his body (manifestness) and soul (hiddenness) which is the heart… And just as God created for himself a seat above the throne, so too did he create for man a seat above the heart which is the innermost heart.[131]

Al-Baghdādī then explains that the cosmological seat (*kursī)* is the locus of divinity *(ulūhiyya)* and the cosmological throne is the locus of mercifulness (*raḥmāniyya).*[132] This refers to a distinction between essence and attribute which was common in Islamic cosmology, occurring for example in al-Ghazālī’s thought.[133] Al-Bagdhādī therefore identifies the innermost heart as man’s essence which emanates unto the heart. The heart then commands the body in accordance with the essence, just as the cosmological seat represents the indivisible essence of God which emanates onto the throne, through which God commands the physical world. In the microcosm of man, the innermost heart’s emanation onto the heart and its subsequent command of the body results in the bodily expression of attributes (*ṣifāt*).

Al-Baghdādī employs this conception of the innermost heart to resolve an outstanding ambiguity regarding its position in relation to the spirit. He states that there has been some disagreement among Sufis over the relationship between the innermost heart and the spirit, and that some have asserted that the spirit is the loftiest faculty while others assert that it is the innermost heart.[134] Al-Baghdādī attempts to resolve this

[131] Al-Baghdādī, *Tuḥfat al-barara,* 6.
[132] Al-Baghdādī, *Tuḥfat al-barara,* 6.
[133] Gianotti, *Al-Ghazālī’s unspeakable doctrine*, 74.
[134] Al-Baghdādī, *Tuḥfat al-barara,* 3.

disagreement by associating the innermost heart with the essence of man which emanates onto the heart. Hence, it can be considered a greater or lesser substance than that of the spirit depending on whichever faculty dominates it, as al-Baghdādī states:

> And if you consider the dominance of the spirit over the throne of the heart, [the innermost heart's] rank is below the rank of the spirit. And if you consider the dominance of God over the throne of the heart then its rank is greater than the rank of the spirit.[135]

Al-Baghdādī attempts to explain why there has been disagreement over the rank of the innermost heart and the spirit. When the spirit is the dominant faculty of the soul, the spirit defines the essence of man's soul. However, when God is dominant over the soul and determines its essence, the innermost heart achieves a more exalted state, above that of the spirit. Hence what determines the state of the innermost heart and the heart is whether the ego, the spirit, or God rules over them. The conduct of the individual depends on a chain of command with God, or the ego, or the spirit at its head, followed by the innermost heart which determines man's essence, to the heart which is the bridge between the soul and the body where the appropriate attribute emerges, and this causes the body to behave according to the heart's command in order to express the attribute. The culmination of this process is what al-Baghdādī means by the term manifesting attributes (*tajallī al-ṣifāt*).

This command of the body is understood as analogous to God's command of the cosmos. Starting from the lowest state of existence this means that at first, the ego dominates the heart. However, as it is overcome there occurs the dominance of the spirit over the heart. The goal of the Sufi does not end here, the spirit too must be transcended so that

[135] Al-Baghdādī, *Tuḥfat al-barara,* 3.

the heart and innermost heart can become the throne and seat of God, at this point man begins to manifest the attributes of God as al-Baghdādī explains:

> And if he attains certainty in this state, the manifestation of the attributes of the spirit are exchanged for the manifestation of the attributes of [God]... And so the heart becomes the throne of [God] and the innermost heart becomes his seat and wayfaring ceases.[136]

This is the ultimate goal of the Sufi, it is the point at which the Sufi reaches *intihā'* (the end of wayfaring) and is allowed to become a shaykh and train disciples. At this point man manifests God's attributes. According to al-Baghdādī this state of *intihā'* opens the potential for infinite progression due to the infinity God's attributes which al-Baghdādī often describes as travelling *within* God rather than travelling *to* Him.[137] Here, the sense of *intihā'* is not perfection but the idea of reaching the presence of God (*ḥaḍrat al-rubūbiyya*), the term bears the sense of an endless process of perfection. As the attributes of God are infinite the Sufi can never complete manifesting them.

These passages build upon the notion of *wujūd* which Kubrā discusses in his *Fawā'iḥ.* While Kubrā sometimes uses the term to refer to existence in a general sense of "being there," he also employs the term to refer to levels of spiritual existence, or psycho-spiritual states.[138] Here *wujūd* is not equivalent to existence in the philosophical sense of the word, but refers to the degree to which man's spiritual being is perfected, as Kubrā explains:

[136] Al-Baghdādī, *Tuḥfat al-barara,* 8.
[137] Al-Baghdādī, *Tuḥfat al-barara,* 13.
[138] Zargar, *The Ten Principles,* 119.

> And know that *wujūd* is not one [station]. For there is not a [station of *wujūd*] but that there is above it another more specific and better one, until it reaches the station of the Truth [God]... And the types of *wujūd* are contained in seven [stations].[139]

Kubrā does not explain what these seven states are exactly. However, it is very tempting to see them in al-Baghdādī's framework. From what we have discussed we can clearly discern seven psycho-spiritual states which al-Baghdādī has used to describe the rank of the soul's perfection in the commanding ego, the blaming ego, the pacified ego, the heart, the innermost heart, the spirit and finally God ruling over the heart. This correlation will appear to be even more significant when we come to explain how visions parallel the state of the soul. For now however, it is important to note that al-Baghdādī is building heavily upon Kubrā's thought, providing us with clearer, more systematised theories regarding the relationship between body and soul.

1.iii. The heart as a mirror

As we have mentioned, the heart is described both as that which commands the body, but also the faculty of the soul which perceives realities. Collapsing both functions of perception and command of the body in the single metaphor of the heart in al-Baghdādī's thought attests to the influence of al-Ghazālī. In addition, characterising the heart as the locus of knowledge and the spiritual organ impresses attributes upon the body is crucial both for the stratification of Sufi psychology as well as the Sufi community since it establishes an intimate link between visions and the rank of the soul, as well as psychological theory and practice.

The assertion that the human soul and body manifest God's attributes requires some clarification in order to avoid accusations of *ḥulūl,* the heresy of God as incarnate in a

[139] Kubrā, *Fawā'iḥ,* 134.

body. Al-Baghdādī does not devote a full discussion to this issue, but with regard to this problem the influence of al-Ghazālī is felt throughout the *Tuḥfa.* Al-Baghdādī often quotes al-Ghazālī's '*Iḥyā' 'ulūm al-dīn* and *Mishkāt al-anwār,* and was heavily influenced by both works. Al-Baghdādī adopts the metaphor of the human heart as a mirror, and employs the term "realities" when referring to knowable truths which man is composed of and are imprinted onto the heart.[140] The conception of the heart as a mirror becomes a central feature of al-Baghdādī's psychology. In the 3rd chapter of the *Tuḥfa* al-Baghdādī explains:

> For the polished mirror, if it aligns with a part of the sun, the sun's light is imprinted on it. And the light which is imprinted on it is not the sun itself, even if the effects of its power are more intense than the effects of the power of the part of the sun [that it reflects]. For the sun itself does not burn cotton and does not ignite it, though the reflection of its rays which are imprinted in a mirror may burn and ignite it. And so is the light of the attributes or the essence (*dhāt)* [of God] if it emerges in the mirror of the heart, it is neither the same attributes nor essence, nor is it other than them, even if the effects of its power [seem] greater.

Here, al-Baghdādī asserts that the attributes which are reflections in this mirror of the heart, are neither identical nor different to God's attributes. This is extremely similar to al-Ghazālī's discussion of the heart which itself relies on ideas found in the work of the 10th century Sufi Abū Ṭālib al-Makkī's (d. 386/996) *Qūt al-qulūb.*[141] The term "realities" and the heart as a mirror are connected in al-Ghazālī's thought. Philosophical theories of knowledge held that during the act of intellection, the rational soul, the subject of intellection (*'āqil*), becomes identical to the object of intellection (*ma'qūl*). This was

[140] Treiger, *Inspired Knowledge* 20.

[141] Treiger, *Inspired Knowledge* 20.

recognised as problematic and a number of philosophers, from Avicenna to al-Farābī and Ibn Rushd, sought to address it.[142]

In order to preclude the possibility of the soul becoming identical or united to God or his attributes in the act of perception al-Ghazālī introduces the concept of the heart in place of the rational soul and characterises it as a mirror which reflects the realities, or forms of things rather than the intelligibles themselves.[143] This removes any notion of unity between the soul and the object of perception by rendering knowledge a reflection of the objects of knowledge whose form only is imprinted in the mirror. This precludes any sense of a literal unity between the soul and God.

Al-Baghdādī clearly grasps the significance of al-Ghazālī's ideas as he employs them in reference to the reflection of the essence and attributes of God in the mirror of the soul in the above passage. Hence, the mirror imagery is not only relevant to the heart's function as the receptor of knowledge but also to its role of commanding the body. The various functions of the soul are collapsed into the metaphor of the heart as a mirror here which means that for al-Baghdādī, knowledge and behaviour are linked. As we have seen the term realities (*ḥaqā'iq*) is employed extensively by al-Baghdādī when referring to knowable things and his assertion that man contains within his composition all the knowable realities in creation.[144] Therefore while al-Baghdādī relies on al-Ghazālī's ideas, he develops this term further by emphasising that the realities are not only found in the external world, but within man himself as well.

He establishes that every perceptible reality external to the human being corresponds to a reality within his own composition. This is important for al-Baghdādī's discussion

[142] Kalin, *Knowledge as the Unity*, 172-173.
[143] Treiger, *Inspired Knowledge,* 32-33.
[144] Treiger, *Inspired Knowledge,* 32-33.

visions, since the realities of the hidden and manifest worlds are made present within man, he is capable of envisioning the truths of these things through his imaginative and spiritual faculties, whether these realities are bodily such as animals or celestial bodies, or spiritual such as angels and jinn, are present in front of him or not. Hence, al-Ghazālī provides a useful set of conceptual tools for al-Baghdādī's development of psychology.

The degree to which a reality is reflected in the mirror of the heart depends upon the degree of perfection that the soul has attained, the extent to which this "mirror" is polished. The blemishes on the mirror are removed through Sufi practices which, once completion is achieved, allows these realities to be reflected and comprehended in full. By shifting the emphasis onto realities within one's own composition, al-Baghdādī's Sufi is not primarily perceiving realities of the external world through the mirror of his soul but realities which are contained within him, but are present in the external world as well. Hence, the imagination could represent these realities in an image without the need to perceive them with a physical organ and the degree to which they are understood depends on the purity of the soul.

This is made clear in al-Baghdādī's development of al-Ghazālī's notion of the heart as a mirror. This is seen most strikingly in his recourse to a metaphor of a house and a mirror within it. This metaphor is introduced by al-Ghazālī in his *Mishkāt al-anwār* to describe a series of lights which represent knowledge and existence, both originating with God and appear in the manifest world through a series of reflections. Here al-Ghazālī presents with the image of the Sun's light which is reflected by moon, passes through an opening in a house, then falls on a mirror which reflects it onto a wall, and is then finally refracted by the wall onto the floor. Al-Ghazālī then likens the Sun's light to God's light and explains that the final refraction of the light which hits the floor is understood to have ultimately originated with God's light. His discussion here emphasises the causal aspect of God's light from which all perceptible things are made

apparent, as he explains that these lights do not regress to no end, but have one origin in God's light.[145]

Al-Baghdādī develops this metaphor further as he presents us with his own metaphor of a dark house with an opening through which light may enter, and a mirror placed within it. Here he explains that if a mirror is placed within the house but is not polished, it will not be possible for anything within the house to be imprinted onto the mirror. He then states that if the mirror is polished, but the house remains dark, there is again no possibility for the images to be reflected. He then explains that the house requires an opening through which light can enter for the things in the house to be imprinted onto the mirror. He then explains that the house represents man's existence, while the mirror represents the heart, and the things within the house are of the hidden world, and seem to correspond to the realities.[146] He explains that:

> Whoever has not polished the heart from the imprints of nature, the blemishes of desires, and the particularities of the ego, will not have imprinted within him the images of the hidden world and will not see a single thing.[147]

This goes some way in clarifying Kubrā's statement that when the Sufi perceives celestial heavens, the cosmological throne, the devil or angels, he perceives things that are not external to himself.[148] It explains that man will realise that heaven and the throne, the devil and the angel are not external to man but are within him, once he becomes purified. Prior to this perfection, the mirror of the heart will not allow the realities to be reflected in it completely, and man will not realise that these realities are

[145] Al-Ghazālī, *Mishkāt,* 53-54.
[146] Al-Baghdādī, *Tuḥfat al-barara,* 38.
[147] Al-Baghdādī, *Tuḥfat al-barara,* 38.
[148] Kubrā, *Fawā'iḥ,* 171.

contained within him until he has freed himself from the bodily, egoistic and spiritual faculties which obscure it.

This links knowledge to the progression of the Sufi through spiritual ranks, and to the cultivation of more exalted attributes, both of which are the result of the soul's perfection. An inseparable connection between epistemology, spiritual progress and behaviour is established here. This connection is further strengthened by placing realities which correspond to those found in the cosmos within man, imbuing the term "realities" with both an epistemic significance as forms imprinted in the heart, as well as an existential one as part of the human's composition.

It is important to note that unlike in al-Ghazālī, it is the composition of man's body and soul that results in the microcosmic nature of man for al-Baghdādī. Hence, the realities for al-Baghdādī are contained with the "house" of existence. Kubrā's use of the term existence (*wujūd*) predicts al-Baghdādī's microcosmology. Kubrā describes the lowest state of the soul as one which is inundated by the densest material, whereas the highest levels are characterised by the most translucent material.[149] This is clearly paralleled in al-Baghdādī's cosmological framework. The soul is revealed to have been unblemished and perfect in its original state until it became entrapped in the physical form of the body. Kubrā had stated in his *Fawā'iḥ* that the Kubrawī way is the way of alchemy, explaining that the goal of the Sufi is to purify the soul from the impurities which have obscured its true state:

> Existence (*al-wujūd*) is composed of four elements, each of them is a darkness, one over the other: earth, water, fire and air. And you are underneath all of these... And our way

[149] Cyrus Ali Zargar, 'The Ten Principles', 124.

> is the way of alchemy, for it is necessary to extract the subtle substance (*al-laṭīfa)* of light from these caverns.[150]

The meaning of Kubrā's *laṭīfa,* here can be found in the 4th chapter of the *Tuḥfa* where al-Baghdādī explains the need for a spiritual guide in the form of a shaykh in order to extract a person's soul from the bodily complexities which obscure it. Here al-Baghdādī explains that some people were created with souls which have more potential than others to arrive at perfection. The potential for the soul to be purified here is a criterion for being accepted as a disciple to a shaykh. We will focus here on the conception of the soul rather than the passage's intended aim of demonstrating the exclusivity of Sufi affiliation:

> What is meant by the divine presence (*al-ḥaḍra al-ilāhiyya*) is the indivisible substance (*al-jawhar*), [meaning] the soul which is the kernel of the human being. And the human souls, even though they share in the reality of the substance-ness (*jawhariyya*) and the purity of light and Godly knowledge... However, their states differ in terms of perfection and [imperfection] which are like that of the planets that are perceived in the skies of this world. For even if they share in true planet-ness and the realities of light, their states differ in perfection and imperfection. For, both the sun and the Alcor (*al-suhā*)[151] are planets, and yet we perceive the perfection of the sun and the inferiority of the Alcor. And such is the state of minerals, for among them are gold, silver, copper and iron... And if the substance of the soul in its original created [form] is perfect, accepted and beloved, then it does not harm it to be smeared in disobedience at the beginning of the affair. And if the substance is lacking, dirty, and rejected, then it does not benefit it to perform acts of worship.[152]

[150] Kubrā, *Fawā'iḥ,* 128-129.

[151] A star in the Ursa Major constellation.

[152] Al-Baghdādī, *Tuḥfat al-barara,* 11.

The intention of this passage in the *Tuḥfa* is meant to clarify that despite Kubrā's statement that the subtle substance, the *laṭīfa* or *jawhar* must be purified from materiality, this does not qualify everyone to become a disciple or shaykh. Attaining an official position in the Sufi institution becomes a more exclusive condition and some people are not capable of it. Despite the intention of the passage, al-Baghdādī's discussion provides more information regarding Kubrā's *laṭifa* here. Kubrā also seems to refer to this *laṭīfa* as a *rūḥ* and a "light from God" in the *Fawā'iḥ.* Al-Baghdādī identifies Kubrā's *laṭīfa* with the *jawhar* in the above passage, and this is in turn defined as the state of divinity which was the original, completely purified condition of the soul.[153] The meaning of the subtle substance here, also described as a *rūḥ* by al-Baghdādī is not the same as the faculty of the soul called the spirit which we have discussed. Rather it is the primordial form of man's soul as the perfect mirror to God. This is apparent as al-Baghdādī explains that both the spiritual and bodily aspects of man veil the subtle substance:

> And the completion of wayfaring (*al-sulūk*) is the emergence from attributes of nature. And what I mean by nature here is what He, God most high, fashioned him at the beginning of his affair... And just as he placed for each reality from the realities a characteristic (*khāṣiyya*), exclusive to it, so did he place in each part of the parts of the human a characteristic. And from the characteristics of the ego are those that emerge from the class of darkness, and from the characteristics of the spirit are those that emerge from the subtleties and light. And God is seventy thousand veils of light and darkness which are these spiritual lights and egoistic bodily darkness. And the disciple does not emerge from these veils of light and darkness, for he is still in his wayfaring.[154]

While the state of the soul when dominated by the spirit is undoubtedly greater than one which is ruled by the ego, it is also revealed to be a barrier to completion. This is

[153] Kubrā, *Fawā'iḥ,* 122.

[154] Al-Baghdādī, *Tuḥfat al-barara,* 12.

because even in this state, man's heart is not the domain of God. Purification entails completely subduing the particulars of the soul, both its spiritual and bodily natures in order for it to become the "throne of God." Hence, the attributes of the spirit and ego are likened to imperfect reflections of the attributes of God which are veiled to greater or lesser degrees. With this in mind, al-Baghdādī reveals his interpretation of a famous prophetic tradition:

> And if the disciple is connected to the shaykh (*murād*), and is governed by the bond of desiring, and there emerges in him the effects of the behaviour of the shaykh, that behaviour removes him from the world of nature to the world of worship which is the mirror to Godliness and the secret of God's statement: I was a hidden treasure and I loved to be known.[155]

Although al-Baghdādī only quotes the first line of the Prophetic narration here, it goes on to say that God created the hidden and manifest worlds in order to be known. We can assume that al-Baghdādī expected his readers to be aware of the full narration. The two worlds here are interpreted as referring to the microcosm in man rather than the macrocosm. Here God is known by the perfection of the soul, when it has been freed from the workings of the spirit and the ego and is able to act as a mirror to God and manifest his attributes through the body, at this point all the realities of man's composition which act as veils are lifted and made known to him, and his being straddles both the hidden and manifest worlds. Here al-Baghdādī shifts the emphasis of the narration to the internal microcosmic composition of man rather than the macrocosm.

Here we witness important developments of Kubrā's ideas which result in a clearer, more stratified system of Sufi psychology. This stratification is part of broader trends in

[155] Al-Baghdādī, *Tuḥfat al-barara,* 10.

Sufism in this period. We can see parallels here with the thought of Yaḥya al-Suhrawardī. Al-Baghdādī's thought also finds parallels in the works of the contemporaneous thinker, Afḍal al-Dīn al-Kashānī (d. 611-612/1214) who also stresses a microcosmic framework where behaviour and perception are linked, culminating in the perfection of the self and knowledge.[156] Whether or not al-Baghdādī and Kashānī had any contact seems impossible to say, however al-Baghdādī's disciple Najm al-Dīn al-Rāzī does quote one of Kashānī's verses in his *mirṣād al-'ibād,* indicating that his thought and writings may have reached Kubrawī circles.[157]

This can most probably be attributed to the reception and influence of al-Ghazālī's thought in intellectual circles throughout Iran and Khwarazm. Clearly his discussion of the role of the heart is indebted to al-Ghazālī and the collapse of a number of the soul's function into the single metaphor of the heart as a mirror is crucial for al-Baghdādī's psychology which unites knowledge and spiritual practice. Gianotti explains al-Ghazālī's notion of the heart ruling the body by comparing the language al-Ghazālī employs in his discussion of the heart with the language he employs in discussions of the cosmological throne.[158] While, al-Ghazālī does not explicitly make this parallel, al-Baghdādī may have identified this himself.

We see that al-Baghdādī not only relies on al-Ghazālī's ideas in systematising Kubrawī thought, but also builds upon them in interesting ways. The reception of al-Ghazālī in al-Baghdādī's thought is incredibly important for his systematisation of Kubrawī psychology. From the duality of the soul, the metaphor of the heart as a mirror, the concept of realities, Ghazālian ideas provide al-Baghdādī with important vocabulary and concepts to draw upon in systematising Kubrā's thought. We can now turn to

[156] Chittick, 'The pertinence', 274-277.

[157] Al-Rāzī, *Mirṣād,* 100.

[158] Gianotti, *Al-Ghazālī's unspeakable doctrine*, 74.

analysing al-Baghdādī's account of dream and visionary experiences based on the framework we have outlined here.

2. Oneirology: Thought impressions, dreams and visions

Dreams in medieval Islamic society were considered to be able to convey truths of the hidden and manifest world and inform the dreamer of a number of truths, from matters of *sharī'a* to divinations. Many treatises were written in attempts to unlock the hidden meanings of dreams, and writers from as early as the 7th century in the case of Ibn Sirīn (d. 110/728), and as late as the 15th century with Kamāl al-Dīn al-Damīrī (d. 808/1405) wrote encyclopaedias listing the meaning of specific dream images.[159] Dreams as a form of divination in medieval Muslim society were an important concern of political rulers and feature prominently in Abbasid historiography.[160] This is seen in the translation of Artemidorus' *Oneirocritica* into Arabic at the caliph al-Ma'mūn's (d. 223/838) request.[161]

Dreams and visions were incorporated into hagiographies and biographies as devices of legitimation and foreshadowing. They feature in accounts of conversion to Sufism and asceticism in the lives of prominent Sufi figures, and also fulfil prophetic roles in historiographies, foreshadowing a ruler who matures to fulfil a dream or vision.[162] Hagiographies often stressed conversion narratives, and biographies often assert the reception of knowledge through visions and dreams. Dreams naturally were an area of increasing interest for Sufis, and by the 12th century Sufism seemed to be the most authoritative institution in the science of dreams.[163] The increased importance of dreams and visions in Sufi thought represents an important transition in the history of

[159] Sirriyeh, *Dreams and Visions,* 98.
[160] Fahd, 'The Dream', 359.
[161] Green, 'The Religious and Cultural Role', 291.
[162] Fahd, 'The Dream', 357.
[163] Ohlander, 'Behind the Veil', 206-207.

Sufism. A more coherent dream theory is relevant to the centralisation of Sufi authority in the figure of the shaykh and establishing a sense of communal belonging. Prior to demonstrating this, we must detail al-Baghdādī's oneirology.

The early Kubrawīs stand out in the area of dream science even among Sufis for developing a more intricate theoretical framework for the interpretation of dreams, as well as explanations for their origins, and the mechanisms by which dreams and visions were produced. In contrast to earlier writings on dream images, such as Ibn Sirīn's *Tafsīr al-aḥlām,* which appear as lists ascribing meanings to particular images without any clear underlying framework, al-Baghdādī's work represents a transition to a coherent and systematised oneirology. The interpretive framework of al-Baghdādī's dream science relies on the micro-cosmological understanding of man and offers a more systematic account of dreaming than Kubrā's writings. This is important since dream experiences were not without controversies. Even God could manifest in a dream through the medium of an image, presenting potential theological problems, something which al-Ghazālī addresses in his treatise *Risāla fī taḥqīq al-ru'ya.*[164]

Kubrawī works dedicate much effort to detailing dream experiences, they also emphasise visions to a greater extent than other contemporaneous Sufi writers. One of the reasons for this is the diagnostic value of the dream. As we have stated, the dream or vision accords with the perfection of the soul.[165] Kubrā describes a scene in the *Fawā'iḥ* where his visions were purified from the black and blue haze to reveal a circle. Once the circle was purified, he began to perceive in it his inner guide. When this circle was polished it became a mirror and he realised the inner guide was himself.[166]

[164] Grunebaum, 'The Cultural Function', 16.
[165] Izutsu, 'Theophanic Ego', 28.
[166] Kubrā, *Fawā'iḥ,* 162-163.

Similar visionary anecdotes also occur in the works of Rūzbihān al-Baqlī (d. 606/1209), a contemporary of both Kubrā and al-Baghdādī, though whether they had ever met one another is impossible to say. Rūzbihān reveals in his own autobiography, the *Kashf al-asrār,* that his innermost heart was revealed to him in visionary experiences.[167] It is clear that al-Baghdādī maintains a similar understanding of visions, which also emerges in the works of his disciple Najm al-Dīn al-Rāzī who points out that visions have three benefits. The first of these is that the perceiver is made aware of the state of his own soul.[168]

However, the theoretical underpinnings of the diagnostic value of the dream require further clarification. Hence, it will be important to understand al-Baghdādī's oneirological system in detail here. For al-Baghdādī dreams and visions parallel spiritual progression so that one may move from the opaque and dark, to clear visions. Al-Baghdādī fills a crucial gap in our understanding of Kubrawī dream theory by offering a system behind the descriptive autobiographical accounts we receive from other Sufi writers with his psychological and cosmological frameworks. Al-Baghdādī provides in the *Tuḥfa* a theory of visions which is only implied in the work of his teacher. This theory is detailed by al-Baghdādī in an attempt to distinguish true spiritual visions from unreliable ones in the 6th chapter of the *Tuḥfa.*

2.i. Dreams and visions as exteriorisation of the soul

For Kubrā the degree of the soul's purification is reflected in visions. This is reflected in al-Baghdādī's work. For al-Baghdādī, when the soul is in rank of the ego, visions are characterised by darkness, or are muddled and require interpretation. By contrast, a higher degree of perfection is characterised by clearer, more vivid dreams and lighter

[167] See Papan-Matin's introduction to *The Unveiling,* 18-20.

[168] Al-Rāzī, *Mirṣād,* 290.

colours.[169] Kubrā however never outlines his system of visions explicitly and we are left to infer it from his description of visions. The framework of visions becomes much more detailed in al-Baghdādī's *Tuḥfa*. Hence, al-Baghdādī takes a significant step in systematising Kubrā's thought here.

Al-Baghdādī maps the visionary experiences of the Sufi onto the micro-cosmological understanding of man's composition which we have outlined. In the *Tuḥfa,* al-Baghdādī describes the progression of visions as literally paralleling the progression of the soul in its ascent through bodily complexity to simplicity, and towards God. The progression of images are described in one passage where al-Baghdādī details the visionary journey of the Sufi, saying:

> He [the seeker] sees the things which are stored within him, and he passes over them and traverses them... And [first] he sees the truths of earthly things in order of animals, and then plants then inanimate things when the attributes of animalness and the others are revealed to him. Then his wayfaring passes on to the elements until he reaches the ether of his inner being which is the culmination of the attributes of the ego. And he sees the truths of the attributes of the ego sometimes... In the image of ugly sensible things... And at times in the images of enemies, [such as] snakes or scorpions... And the wayfarer in this position of travelling is between two perspectives: One looking to what is within him, and one looking to what is above him. And if he looks to what is within him he sees the truths of earthly things, and if he looks to what is above him he sees the celestial and heavenly spheres. And so the perception of the lower things is due to the condition of his station (*maqām*) and the perception of higher things is out of the desire for [further] travelling and the removal of contraction from within his inner being.[170]

[169] See Kubrā, *Fawā'iḥ.*

[170] Al-Baghdādī, *Tuḥfat al-barara,* 7.

Here, al-Baghdādī presents the visionary ascent of the individual as an inversion of cosmic sequence of creation. This microcosmic understanding is emphasised as al-Baghdādī states that the seeker sees things stored within him. In other words, he perceives the realities of the hidden and manifest which are contained within his composition. The disciple begins his journey with the most complex bodily existent and this is paralleled in his visions. As he progresses along the path of Sufi discipline, these images move from material complexity to simplicity until he begins to see the celestial bodies which indicate the higher faculties of the soul. At one point in the text al-Baghdādī equates the celestial bodies with the heart directly as he says, "the seeker witnesses the planets of the heart" (*yushāhid kawākib al-qalb*).[171] Since he has not yet "passed over" the celestial bodies but perceives them above him, al-Baghdādī's visionary traveller here stops between the states of the pacified ego which is symbolised by the ether, and the heart which is symbolised by the celestial spheres.

This is accompanied by the removal of *qabḍ,* a psychological disposition indicating contraction, a sense of dread or being overcome with awe or fear. Contraction is often associated with the initial stages of the Sufi path where the initiate must undertake austerities and enter a self-effacing mode of conduct in order to tame the ego. The removal of contraction and the perception of the celestial spheres indicates the emergence of its antithesis, expansion (*basṭ*), indicating for al-Baghdādī the delight of the soul in acts of worship and austerity which is characteristic of the disposition of the advanced Sufi rather than the initiate. The association of the terms travelling (*sayr)* and wayfaring (*sulūk)* with this visionary journey is also crucial for understanding the relevance of visions to the stratification of the Sufi path.[172]

[171] Al-Baghdādī, *Tuḥfat al-barara,* 14.

[172] Lewisohn, 'The Spiritual Journey', 365.

For now though we must point to the interdependence of Sufi practice, visions, and the manifestation of attributes which emerges in this passage. Hence, the visionary progression mirrors the progression of Sufi training from initiate to shaykh. Al-Baghdādī systematises Kubrā's work by emphasising the correspondence between visions and micro-cosmology. In the above passage for example al-Baghdādī echoes Kubrā's assertion that stage of the pacified ego is characterised by a pure fire.[173]

The relationship between cosmology and visions is also the framework upon which Kubrawī visionary colour theory is built. Al-Baghdādī's system reveals that the coloured lights which are recounted in Kubrā's *Fawā'iḥ* and in the work of countless other Kubrawī authors, are related to the progression from bodily complexity and opaqueness to subtle substances and translucency. Each faculty of man's composition acts as a lens that distorts the pure colourless light of God. Hence, the first colours which the disciple beholds reflect the material density of the most complex existents which do not allow light to pass through, while the later stages of the path are associated with lighter colours indicating the transparency of the more translucent elements, eventually ending in a complete lack of colour signifying the pure, immaterial, non-bodily substance of the soul. The colours listed begin with dark blue and indigo which indicate the psych-spiritual dominance of the ego. The colour of the heart is yellow, and when mixed with the blueness of the ego produces green which indicates a pacified ego. Al-Baghdādī also mentions red which seems to represent the workings of the spirit over the heart. The final colour mentioned is white and indicates the perfection of the soul.[174]

This emphasis on bodily opaqueness and immaterial translucency is startlingly similar to the illuminationist mysticism of the contemporaneous Shihāb al-Dīn Yaḥya al-

[173] Kubrā, *Fawā'iḥ,* 127.

[174] Al-Baghdādī, *Tuḥfat al-barara,* 2.

Suhrawardī (d. 587/1191), though whether he and any of the Kubrawīs ever met or were aware of each other's thought is not possible to determine. Central to Yaḥya al-Suhrawardī's psychology is the need to extract the soul which is pure light from the bodily composition of man which obscures light.[175] Yaḥya al-Suhrawardī also discusses visions and dreams on the basis of this cosmologically informed understanding of psychology whereby darkness acts as an obscurant to spiritual realities.[176]

In Kubrā's *Fawā'iḥ,* we are left to infer the role of translucency and opaqueness and its relationship to micro-cosmology by analysing the visions Kubrā presents us with. For example, in detailing the difference between visions of the ego and the devil Kubrā describes the following:

> *Wujūd* is an intense darkness at first, and if it is purified a little it takes the form of a black cloud. And if it is the throne of Satan it is red. And if it is corrected and the particulars (*ḥuẓūẓ*) are removed from it, and the truths remain, it is purified and is whitened like cirrus. And the ego when it begins [to manifest], its colour is the colour of the sky which is blue... And the ego emanates upon existence and fashions it. And if it is purified and made good, it emanates onto it goodness, and goodness grows from it. And if it emanates onto it evil, then just the same, evil grows from it.[177]

Here Kubrā uses the term *wujūd* to refer to the degree of the soul's perfection rather than existence.[178] The sense of the term here seems further refined to refer to the soul's command of the body which establishes a correspondence between visions and the expression of attributes. Reading these passages through the lens of al-Baghdādī's system we can make sense of Kubrā's underlying theories better. This link between vision and attribute is established in the *Tuḥfa* by rendering the heart the locus of

[175] Al-Suhrawardī, *Hayākil al-nūr,* 67-68; 90-91; See also al-Jerrahi's introduction to *Hayākil al-nūr.*
[176] Al-Suhrawardī, *Hayākil al-nūr,* 96.
[177] Kubrā, *Fawā'iḥ,* 125-126.
[178] Zargar, 'The Ten Priniciples', 117-118.

perception as well as the spiritual organ which commands the body. Because of this, al-Baghdādī is able to tie the command of the body to perception, linking visions and attributes and establishing the diagnostic value of the image.

For al-Baghdādī the purification of the mirror of the heart within the microcosmic framework of man determines these images. Here the darkness of visions signifies materiality while purity and light indicate ascension to a higher mode of existence. This provides the underlying framework of the above passage where Kubrā explains that goodness and evil stem from the "emanation" of the darkness or light of soul onto the "existence" of the body. Al-Baghdādī's systemisation is also helpful in explaining many other meanings of the visions which Kubrā recounts. For example, Kubrā describes the different types of fire a person can witness with the following:

> The difference between the fire of remembrance (*dhikr*) and the fire of Satan is that the fires of remembrance are pure and fast-moving and climb high. And the fire of Satan is in a state of impurity smoke and darkness, and in addition, it is slow moving.[179]

This equates to al-Baghdādī's cosmological framework from which we can infer that the smoky, and tumultuous fire of the devil is due to the lustful and consumptive characteristics of the ego, representing a soul which is led by its bodily faculties and requires "being fed." On the other hand, the purity of the fire of remembrance, which perhaps resembles a gas lit fire, is symbolic of the ether, the most subtle element on the sphere of earth, signifying a pacified ego.

2.ii. Thought impressions and the inner senses

[179] Kubrā, *Fawā'iḥ,* 127.

In addition to clarifying the significance of Kubrā's visionary progression by providing a cosmological framework, al-Baghdādī also provides us with an account of the interaction among the hidden world, the soul, and the bodily organs which produce dreams in order to explain the mechanisms through which these visions emerge. For this we turn to the 6th chapter of the *Tuḥfa* where al-Baghdādī explains how to distinguish between true and false visions. He begins by discussing *khawāṭir,* or thought impressions.

The earliest discussions of thought impression emerge in *kalām* theology in the context of the debate regarding free will and predestination. Wolfson ascribes the introduction of the concept of the *khāṭir* to the Mu'tazali theologian Ibrāhīm al-Naẓẓām (d. 230/845) who explained that man must have two such sources of thoughts, one that bids desisting in an act and another that bids advancing in it.[180] Thought impressions were related to debates regarding predestination and free will, since the thought is the precursor to action and depending on its origins, whether internal to the human being or external to him, could favour the argument of either free will or predestination. For these reasons they also carried eschatological significance, resulting in punishment and reward in the hereafter.

In the *Tuḥfa* the sense of the term is that it applies to thoughts which emerge in the soul without any conscious effort, hence they are impressed upon it. By al-Baghdādī's time thought impressions had begun to be the subject of more intricate and nuanced analysis. Moving beyond their eschatological significance, attempts were made to detail the various origins of thought impressions and their effects on the soul. Al-Qushayrī recounts that Junayd al-Baghdādī detailed thought impressions in the following manner:

[180] Wolfson, *The Philosophy,* 628.

> They are speeches that enter the soul. They may be dictated by an angel or by Satan; sometimes they are the soul's own suggestions, at other times they come from God... When a thought comes from an angel, its authenticity is affirmed by [religious] knowledge... [And the thought impression] from Satan, when it incites to disobedience [of God] and you reject it, will encourage you with another disobedience, for all disobediences are equal... And it was said that every thought impression from an angel may be agreeable or disagreeable, but if it is a thought impression from God, there will be no disagreement on the part of the perceiver.[181]

Here, the source of thought impressions can be internal such as a faculty of the soul, or an external spiritual being such as an angel or the devil. These impressions appear in Sufi texts as a way to explain the elusive phenomenon of unconscious thoughts. In the *Tuḥfa* what is emphasised is the effects of the thought impressions, their consequences for man's behaviour, knowledge and the perfection of the soul.

In al-Ghazālī's work, these thought impressions determine man's behaviour, yet their eschatological significance remains paramount for him as he describes the thoughts as "the movers of the will" and "the beginnings of actions," and goes on to say that there are two sources of thought, one angelic and one demonic which cause the emergence of a thought in the mind.[182] Wrongdoing and right-doing ultimately go back to these sources of thought impressions. In his *Iḥyā'* al-Ghazālī makes clear that these thoughts bear eschatological consequences, motivating man to do that which either increases his reward or punishment in the hereafter.[183] A similar emphasis is placed on the thought impression's relevance to behaviour and eschatology in 'Umar al-Suhrawardī's *'Awārif*

[181] Al-Qushayrī, *al-Risālah,* 84.
[182] Al-Ghazālī, *Iḥyā',* vol. 5, 97.
[183] Al-Ghazālī, *Iḥyā',* vol. 5, 97.

where thought impressions are restricted to four types which fall into the two categories, either leading to reward or punishment in the hereafter.[184]

In contrast to this emphasis on the eschatological significance of thought impressions, al-Baghdādī seems unconcerned with whether or not a thought results in rewards or punishments in the afterlife in this particular discussion. He also does not limit the sources of thought impressions to the two categories of good and bad, or angelic and demonic. Though thought impressions are related to actions and attributes in al-Baghdādī's thought, his interest in them here is in their role of impressing visions and dreams upon the mind. In al-Baghdādī's and Kubrā's work, there is an attempt to move beyond a binary conception of good thoughts and evil with regards to thought impressions, as ultimately all thoughts are portrayed as veils to God's divine inspiration which the Sufi must tear down through the practice of seclusion and meditation. Kubrā explains at one point in the *Fawā'iḥ* that the thought impressions from the devil can actually lead a person closer to God:

> The Satanic thought is of many types and the egoistic thought is of just one type. And the soul is like a child, and its enemy is Satan who fashions something for it, and so it believes him... It may be that [God] makes the worshiper reach a state of closeness through the medium of Satan. For Satan can cast in their hearts the love of worship to impress people. And they worship Him for the sake of [impressing] people, turning to them so that people [will also] turn to them, but [in doing so] their awe [of God] increases. And if they figure that out, they submerge themselves in the ocean of worship.[185]

Al-Baghdādī has a similar understanding of the nuances of these thought impressions. For example, al-Baghdādī states that if the devil is unable to move the person to

[184] Al-Suhrawardī, '*Awārif*, 462-463.
[185] Kubrā, *Fawā'iḥ,* 142.

breaking the manifest *sharīʿa,* these thoughts will begin to distort the believer's mind within the bounds of the law through *waswasa.*[186] The term *waswasa*, a type of satanic whisper, recurs throughout the *Tuḥfa* often accompanied by the term *hawājis.* The latter term is less malevolent than the former as it does not carry the Quranic association with the devil, for this reason al-Baghdādī seems to attribute it to the ego rather than the devil. Al-Baghdādī explains that devilish thoughts attempt to reinforce the ego within the bounds of the *sharīʿa.* They manifest a sort of obsessive behaviour, or are characterised by impressing doubt in the mind. Al-Baghdādī goes on to describe an example of this:

> As it was said in the hadith: there is for ablution a devil called *alwilhān* who invites [the believer] to waste water. And this is what many initiates are afflicted with in their beginnings, like the *waswasa* in prayer and in cleaning clothes. It was said that Abū Sulaymān al-Darānī was afflicted with *wiswās* at the start of his journey. And he realised one day, in the middle of winter, that he was performing the ablution and washing his body parts repeatedly, harming himself and saying, "forgive [me], forgive [me]." He then heard a voice saying: forgiveness is in [religious] knowledge. So he busied himself with knowledge and afterwards had a vision while praying on the waste of sheep which said to him: do you pray on what is ritually impure? He replied: this is something which is not agreed upon by the scholars.[187]

Devilish whispers do not always cause the person to sin, but instead may cause obsessions and mental imbalances which are not technically in breach of the law. Al-Baghdādī brings forward examples of devilish whispers causing the disciple to falsely interpret Prophetic narrations and Qur'anic verses in order to achieve the aims of his own ego. He mentions instances where in a period of seclusion (*khalwa*), an initiate may be tempted to leave his seclusion when presented with certain prophetic traditions or

[186] Al-Baghdādī, *Tuḥfat al-barara,* 25.
[187] Al-Baghdādī, *Tuḥfat al-barara,* 25.

Qur'anic verses. Thought impressions are the basis of behaviour and prior to knowledge since the soul will cause one to interpret things in order to justify an egoistic or devilish behaviour if the soul is not yet purified. This is one reason why al-Baghdādī considers it superfluous to study religious texts during seclusion, since religious knowledge is subject to the disposition of the soul which dictates a person's thoughts and desires, and manipulates his reason.

The sources of thought impressions mentioned by al-Baghdādī are the ego, the devil, angels, the heart, the spirit, the Sufi shaykh and finally *ilhām* (divine inspiration). Divine inspiration though is not technically a thought impression according to al-Baghdādī. The thought impressions originating from the Sufi shaykh are a particularly important addition to this list as they are not mentioned in previous sources, and have implications for the structure and identity of the Sufi community which we will detail later. Meier also notes that the thought impressions of the shaykh are a "new and interesting" addition to the list of thought impressions.[188] This conception of the shaykh as a source of thought impressions is dependent upon the adoption of body-soul dualism.

In listing all these impressions al-Baghdadī diverges from al-Qushayrī by asserting the ability to receive thoughts from all the faculties of the soul. This is necessary given al-Baghdādī's conception of man as containing all the realities of the hidden and manifest from which the soul must be purified. This theoretical framework is not present in al-Qushayrī's thought and so al-Baghdādī disagrees with him regarding the notion that some faculties of the soul can never be known or understood by the individual and remain unintelligible to him:

[188] Meier, *Die Fawā'iḥ*, 134.

> And the truth of this matter is that to know, and to be able to discern different thoughts from one another depend upon knowing the sources of the thoughts. The seeker, if he does not know the truth of his soul will not know the truth of its thoughts, and if he does not know the truth of the devil with its wiles and ways within the seeker, he does not know the truth of its thoughts. And likewise he who does not know the heart does not know its speech or thoughts. And he, who has not witnessed the angel and does not know him, does not know his thoughts... and he who does not know the spirit does not know its divine inspiration. And this is why al-Qushayrī, in his chapter on interpreting the thoughts related the saying of some of the seekers that, 'your ego is untrustworthy, and your heart never lies, and even if you have struggled with all your ability to have your spirit speak to you, it will not speak to you.' But for me, this speaker knew his ego and its lies, and knew his heart and its truth. But he did not know the spirit and so concluded that it does not communicate to its owner as the heart does.[189]

Al-Qushayrī, though a towering figure in the history of Sufi thought, is contradicted on more than one occasion in al-Baghdādī's *Tuḥfa.* In the 12th century there existed traditions which attempted to portray al-Qushayrī as a subordinate of his contemporary, the Shaykh Abū Sa'īd ibn Abī al-Khayr (d. 440/1049). The sayings of Abū Sa'īd were compiled in the *Asrār al-tawḥīd* by his grandson Muḥammad ibn Munawwar in the late 12th century which coincides with al-Baghdādī's lifetime.[190] These works contain a number of stories and hagiographical accounts which suggest that Qushayrī was jealous of Abū Sa'īd's superior access to the divine, as well as stories where Abū Sa'īd rebukes Qushayrī for ill conduct towards his disciples, portraying him as a less effective shaykh.[191] Al-Baghdādī seems to adopt this narrative of the relationship between the two Sufis as he constantly exhibits great reverence for Abū Sa'īd, referring to him often and always as *shaykh,* while referring to al-Qushayrī with the title

[189] Al-Baghdādī, *Tuḥfat al-barara,* 26.
[190] Al-Munawwar, *asrār al-tawḥīd,* 7.
[191] Al-Munawwar, *asrār al-tawḥīd,* 7.

ustādh.[192] Al-Baghdādī tends to refer to al-Qushayrī as an authoritative source but maintains the prerogative to explicitly disagree with him.

Breaking with previous tradition in this instance is important for al-Baghdādī since thought impressions determine the images one receives in sleep or in states of elevated consciousness. The ability of the spirit to communicate through thought impressions and the images they produce is crucial for establishing the diagnostic value of visions, representing the realities stored within the Sufi which parallel his progress along the path, past the stage of the spirit to the actualisation of God's attributes. Al-Baghdādī goes on to explain that as the soul advances in purification, so too does its understanding of thought impressions advance:

> With the light of belief (*īmān*) which is found in the heart, [the seeker] comes to know the thoughts [impressed upon him] by the angel. If he perfects the light of belief in the heart, he begins to see with his heart's eye. So he witnesses the lights of angelic thoughts, the thoughts of the spirit... And [the thought] speaks to its owner with what it contains of goodness and [its owner's] ear hears, and he comes to understand the angelic thoughts and the thoughts of the spirit and the thoughts of divine inspiration (*ilhām*). And he is able to distinguish between them (divine inspirations) and the thoughts of the spirit.[193]

Here, al-Baghdādī stratifies knowledge of thought impressions. As the Sufi progresses along the path, he begins to understand the faculties of the soul and the external beings from which thought impressions arise after passing certain milestones. Al-Baghdādī explains what understanding these thoughts entails. Hence, he explains that the difference between egoistic and satanic thoughts by explaining that the ego desires a particular material satisfaction such as "a carrot dipped in dates" while the satanic

[192] Al-Baghdādī, *Tuḥfat al-barara*, 26.
[193] Al-Baghdādī, *Tuḥfat al-barara*, 26.

thoughts are more insidious and do not focus on one desire. Al-Baghdādī goes on to explain how to distinguish between angelic thoughts and divine inspiration saying that the angelic thought bids correct behaviour but this creates a tension in the soul since it is contested by satanic and egoistic thoughts which "disturb" it, whereas divine inspiration is never contested by any thought impression.[194]

There is a sense in the *Tuḥfa* that divine inspiration is constantly muddled by thought impressions which corroborate with the rank of the soul since al-Baghdādī states that it is not a thought impression at all and that it is veiled by thought impressions.[195] In the *Tuḥfa* divine inspiration is the absence of thought impressions. In order to receive divine inspiration al-Baghdādī prescribes that the Sufi should enter seclusion and perform remembrance or *dhikr*. Al-Baghdādī stresses that in seclusion the disciple should negate the reception of thought impressions through *dhikr,* and specifically through repeating the phrase "*lā illaha illā Allāh*."

Interpretations of thoughts, visions and dreams should be deferred to the Sufi shaykh who, having mastered his soul and actualised the attributes of God understands the origins of these thoughts. Al-Baghdādī is keen to stress that his characterisation of the nature of the sources of thought impressions is only a general observation and each one must be considered according to the specific experiences of the disciple quoting Kubrā's *Fawā'iḥ.*[196]

Al-Baghdādī's assertion that the purpose of remembrance is to negate thought impressions reveals that these thought impressions act as the veils of darkness and light which reveal some spiritual communication but obscure God and divine

[194] Al-Baghdādī, *Tuḥfat al-barara,* 26.
[195] Al-Baghdādī, *Tuḥfat al-barara,* 26.
[196] Al-Baghdādī, *Tuḥfat al-barara,* 27; Kubrā, *Fawā'iḥ,* 125.

inspiration from the human soul as attributes do. When God commands the heart, the Sufi comes to know the origins of all his thoughts and is able to distinguish between them and divine inspiration. For al-Baghdādī their negation allows divine inspiration to be felt as he states in outlining his rules of seclusion:

> The 6th [rule] is negating thoughts in their entirety by nurturing the form of remembrance and its meanings. And he should not turn to discerning between thoughts from each other. Even if some of the thoughts are from the ego, and some are from meeting Satan, and some are from meeting the angels and some are from being met with divine inspirations. For it harms him to busy himself with discerning between thoughts, a true harmfulness. And Satan harms him in this regard with devilish whispers and paranoid thoughts. It is his duty to avoid all thoughts and this is not made easy except with the nurturing of manifest (*ẓāhir)* remembrance (*dhikr*).[197]

We know from al-Baghdādī's interpretations of Sharaf al-Dīn Balkhī's dreams that the formula of this manifest remembrance was to repeat the profession of faith.[198] And though we have little information regarding what the ritual of remembrance entailed during al-Baghdādī's time, if we look to al-Simnānī, we see that the profession of *lā illāha illā Allah* was accompanied by a specific motion of the head along with specific breathing patterns.[199] The theory is that the performance of remembrance would keep the mind free from thoughts. Al-Baghdādī explains that with this negation of thought impressions, the Sufi can receive divine inspiration since it is not a thought impression at all but is constantly barred from entering the mind due to the presence of other thoughts.

[197] Al-Baghdādī, *Tuḥfat al-barara,* 19.
[198] Meier, 'An Exchange of Letters', 252-266.
[199] Jamal Elias, *The Throne Carrier,* 127-129.

These thought impressions are bound to the phenomena of dreams and visions. Al-Baghdādī explains that dreams and visions are produced in conjunction with these thought impressions. He states that, just as man has five outer senses, so too does he have five inner senses located in the brain (*dimāgh*). In this passage, he mentions Avicenna's five inner senses. These are the common sense (*al-ḥiss al-mushtarak*), which gathers the sensory data from physical senses, the imaginal store (*al-khayāl*) which stores the sensory data, estimation (*al-wahm*) which gathers the meanings of sensor data, and the store of these meanings is termed *al-dhākira*. Finally there is the imaginative faculty (*al-mutakhayyila*) which is able to combine and reproduce different images and meanings:

> As for explaining witnessing [visions] and distinguishing the truth from falsehood in [this experience], just as God has created for man the five senses in the manifest world, to behold it with the senses of sight, hearing, taste, smell and touch. Likewise did he create in man's brain (*dimāgh*) a power where all the images of the senses are gathered, termed by the doctors and philosophers as the common sense (*al-ḥiss al-mushtarak*). This sense has a store termed the imagination (*khayāl*), so that if the sensed things are absent from the manifest senses, this power produces them in [man's] inner self, as if he is [truly] witnessing and seeing them. This is because the imaginative power keeps the images of sensed things and arranges them.[200]

Al-Baghdādī then explains that during sleep, or in the event that a person is overwhelmed (*hajamāt)* by an impression when the mind is no longer occupied by the outer senses, or in a state which he describes as between consciousness and unconsciousness (*ghayba*) induced through remembrance rituals (*dhikr*), the imaginative faculty is "strengthened" and "speaks" of whatever is dominant over the person's inner being (*bāṭin*) by means of the images of sensible things which have been

[200] Al-Baghdādī, *Tuḥfat al-barara,* 27.

stored in the mind.[201] In other words, whichever faculty dominates the soul impresses its thoughts onto it. The inner senses then combine the sense data gathered in waking life into a symbolic representation of the thought impression which is then projected onto the mental screen of the individual.

This again is dependent on the Avicennan understanding of the function of the inner senses. For Avicenna, in the event of physical sensation, the perception is transferred via the pneuma to the nerves where an image is created, this is then sent to the common sense where it is connected to other sense data and stored. For Avicenna the outer senses always function in conjunction with the inner senses. Hence, while the outer senses perceive the world, the inner senses are constantly called upon to make sense of it so that the intellect may abstract truths from it.[202] However, when the outer senses cease to function the imaginative faculty is free to combine images and meanings and present them to the mind. Al-Baghdādī relies on this conception of the inner senses in his account of dreams:

> So, if the person sleeps and his manifest senses are suspended from him, or if he is subjected to, or impressed upon by the concerns of the hidden (*ghayb*) such that he is turned away from the perceptible world [in awe], the imaginative power strengthens and manifests whatever dominates the inner state of that person through the medium of what is stored within the imaginal store (*khayāl*). If the inner being is dominated by the thought of the devil or the ego, the imaginative power, with the workings of the estimative faculty (*al-wahm*) clothes each thought [from the devil or ego] with a sensible image which has a meaning appropriate to the meaning of that thought impression (*khāṭir*).[203]

And:

[201] Al-Baghdādī, *Tuḥfat al-barara,* 27.
[202] Hasse, *Avicenna's De Anima,* 121-122.
[203] Al-Baghdādī, *Tuḥfat al-barara,* 27.

> If the disciple exerts effort into his striving and enters the door of seclusion (*khalwa*) and removes himself from creation and perseveres in recollection (*dhikr*) and works in subduing his sense of sight, which is the most powerful and active of the senses, and his sense of hearing which is next after [sight in activity and power], by means of sitting in a darkened place where he is not required to shut his eyelids. There occurs to him, in the state of wakefulness (*yaqḍa*) or unconsciousness (*ghayba),* which is the state between sleep (*nawm*) and wakefulness, perception of things just as the sleeper in his sleep perceives them. Hereafter the images of the visions of awe (*murībāt*) differ because they are coloured [differently], at times, they are the images of the devilish thoughts or those of the ego which are derived from the imaginative power. At times, they are of the same class as incomprehensible dreams, even if they are viewed in a state of wakefulness or witnessing (*mushāhada*). At other times they are the images of the heart and the spirit.[204]

This is a much more comprehensive explanation of the production of dreams and visions which explains the interaction between spiritual beings, the soul and the inner senses. Here, we attain a much clearer understanding of visions as manifestations of the soul which has been asserted by scholars of the Kubrawiyya.[205] This offers system behind the dreams and visions by borrowing some philosophical and Ghazālian diction and by crafting an interdependence between cosmology, the inner senses, and thought impressions in order to arrive at a detailed oneirology.

This system is dependent on the metaphor of the heart as a mirror which al-Baghdādī adopts from al-Ghazālī. The inner senses produce images relating to the hidden world of spirits, clothing each thing from the unseen with a sensible image appropriate to it

[204] Al-Baghdādī, *Tuḥfat al-barara,* 27.
[205] Izutsu, 'Theophanic Ego', 37.

once the outer senses are subdued.[206] Yet the ability of the inner senses to perfectly represent these spiritual truths through images remains nebulous and unclear so long as the *wasāwis* of the devil and the desires of the ego are present. With Sufi practice the mirror of the heart is purified and these obtrusive clouds dissipate and a veridical dream emerges (*ru'ya ṣādiqa).* Quoting a prophetic tradition, al-Baghdādī describes this as one 46th of prophecy.[207]

Al-Baghdādī here also draws upon discussions of prophecy in al-Ghazālī and Avicenna's thought. For Avicenna the inner senses are bodily organs and do not convey knowledge themselves. They only present the intellect with particulars from which it can derive universal truths.[208] Still Avicenna does provide an account of the intellect connecting to the inner senses and revealing truths through dreams in his explanation of prophecy. This is not so different from the above passage, since for al-Baghdādī the inner senses play a similar role with respect to the thought impression.[209]

For Avicenna, when the imagination is free from distractions of the senses, it could connect to the intellect to produce a true prophetic vision or *ru'ya*. Al-Ghazālī recasts Avicenna's ideas by describing the instance of prophecy as a connection between the cosmological tablet and the heart.[210] Al-Baghdādī develops a more comprehensive understanding of the unconscious human psyche by relating thought impressions to the production of dreams within a microcosmic framework. Al-Baghdādī's oneirology also accounts for the entire spectrum of dreams and visions, from those produced by

[206] The notion that sense deprivation allowed a person to enter into a state between consciousness and unconsciousness was common in medieval Islamic esoteric practices. The stipulation that certain actions should be carried out in darkness is mentioned in magical texts. For al-Baghdādī the purpose of sense deprivation is to enter this liminal state which loosens the conscious mind's control over the inner senses, without falling into a state of sleep.

[207] Al-Baghdādī, *Tuḥfat al-barara,* 27.

[208] Hughes, *The Texture of the divine,* 93-94.

[209] Hughes, *The Texture of the divine,* 99.

[210] Treiger, *Inspired Knowledge,* 80.

the ego and the devil which are worthless, to divine inspiration. Hence prophetic dreams are presented within an overarching system which explains the relationship between man's inner senses, his soul and thought impressions. Here, al-Baghdādī systematises Kubrawī oneirology by drawing on theological and philosophical concepts such as thought impressions and inner senses.

2.iii. Spiritual visions and the imagination

For al-Baghdādī the dream *ru'ya* given its dependence on the imaginative faculty, is a type of vision which is less clear and vivid than the clairvoyant vision directly perceived by the spirit. Al-Baghdādī explains that when thought impressions and the physical senses are subdued, and if one has tamed his ego so that it may not interfere in the production of visions, the spirit produces images to the eye directly rather than through the imaginative faculty. Hence, it is as if the vision is perceived with the eye. He describes this as the peel or outer shell (*qishr*) of divine inspiration. This is explained by al-Baghdādī in the following:

> The spirit benefits from the outer senses, a power with which it apprehends the images of the sensed things, without the use of the sensory organ. It may be that the seeker perceives a vision in his sleep, unconsciousness (*ghayba*), or wakefulness when his eyes are shut. He witnesses that thing with his eye, but there is no doubt that the sight is not related to the eye in any way because it was closed. So, it must be from the perceptions of the spirit through the power which it had extracted from the [outer] senses.[211]

Al-Baghdādī explains here that the image is presented to the eye even if it is not physically present in front of it. For al-Baghdādī this class of visions are true, as opposed to the symbolic images of a dream which require interpretation. Hence, they

[211] Al-Baghdādī, *Tuḥfat al-barara,* 27-28.

may present the Sufi with an instance of divination, beholding a future event, seeing things which are occurring elsewhere, or perceiving spiritual beings such as angels. This is a more direct and certain vision than a dream. While al-Baghdādī states that the vision is not beheld due to the workings of the physical organ, he also indicates that the vision is predicated on the ability to see since it is a power which is in some way dependent on the sensory organ (*quwwa mustafāda min al-'ayn).* The literal nature of these images is emphasised as he continues to describe an instance where the prophet and his companions perceive Gabriel in the form of a man:

> For the prophet and his companions saw Gabriel in the image of a bedouin. And there was no doubt that the image was not from the workings of the imaginative power. For [the workings of the imaginative power] differs according to the natures of people and are never of the same type, and they differ markedly… But when the sight was agreed upon by the companions on one image and opinion, and there were no differences in between their conditions [of apprehension], we know that such an image is not from the class of images that are created by the imagination but are due to the angel taking on a bodily shape. And this is the fulfilment of the station of the spirit (*martabat al-rūḥāniyya*).[212]

Al-Baghdādī argues here that these experiences are verifiable as truths because they appear in the same form to everybody, they are not symbolic and no longer subjective, they are universal images and are collectively shared among all people, just as everyone agreed on the image of Gabriel. Therefore when one is rid of the ego and Satan which produced opaque, confused and contaminated images, true visions begin to emerge. Progress along the path of purifying the soul is accompanied by a higher capacity for these true visions which are no longer in need of interpretation.

[212] Al-Baghdādī, *Tuḥfat al-barara,* 28.

Al-Baghdādī's assertion that it is not the eye or the imagination which perceives this spiritual truth, but "the spirit which is strengthened by the power of the eye", leaves us with little information regarding how these visions are perceived and by what organ. This becomes even more problematic as al-Baghdādī later seems to suggest that the spirit can produce an image in conjunction with the imaginal store. Neither mode of perception is fully explained though we know that the image is not a result of the imaginative faculty *mutakhayyila* which takes an active role in producing images, but the imaginal store which is the treasury of images. Al-Baghdādī seems to suggest that the spirit can either access the imaginal store to represent these perceptions, or produce the perception directly to the mind.

Unfortunately, the exact mechanism by which the spirit perceives these things is not explained by al-Baghdādī though there seems to be a sense that the spirit engages the physical eye directly. There is also a sense that this is predicated on the notion of body-soul dualism, allowing the spirit to perceive events in the world which are not in front of the eye. The explanation for this is missing in al-Baghdādī's work, however if we turn to 'Ammār al-Bidlīsī, one of Kubrā's teachers, he explains that upon the purification of the soul, the Sufi is able to focus the physical eye on the form of a vision. In this case, physical sight gains the capacity for spiritual sight (*ittaṣafa al-baṣar bi-ṣifat al-baṣīra).*[213]

We will discuss this more fully when we come to al-Baghdādī's account of physical sensation where al-Baghdādī discusses the need to close the distance between the hidden and manifest aspects of man's composition. For now, we must content ourselves with the notion that there is a sense in which these visions are predicated on the ability to see. It also may indicate the duality of the body and soul, as the spirit which is not temporally bound is able to perceive events in other places or in the hidden world and present them to the mind as if they are perceived with the physical eye. Regardless, al-

[213] Al-Bidlīsī, *Bahjat al-ṭā'ifa,* 69.

Baghdādī explains that if the spirit does draw on the imaginal store, the reality of the image remains the same even if the particularities of the image differ from person to person:

> And it may be that the image is in the workings of the imagination by the will of God most high, just as you perceive the angels in the image of eunuchs, in which you are graced with two appropriate meanings. One is the absence of the instrument of desire in the angel and his independence from [it], and the other is due to their closeness to the presence [of God's throne]. And [the imagination's] function is as an intermediary between The Creator and creation... And if it is not an instance of perceiving souls, and was instead an image in the hidden world like heaven or hell, it may be that the perception of the spirit is free from the workings of the power of the imagination, and it may be that the perceptions of the spirit is mixed with the workings of the imagination. And that is why the wayfarers perceive the truth of heaven and hell in different images.[214]

In this example of angels appearing as eunuchs al-Baghdādī explains that a eunuch is the closest servant to the king and lacks sexual desires. Hence, the image of a eunuch should be interpreted as representing an angel since they are the closest servants of God and lack bodily desires. In this case, the particular image of a eunuch, heaven or hell may differ from person to person, but the meaning of the image remains the same. Here the inner senses clothe a truth from the hidden world with a sensible image. Despite the variance from person to person in perceiving the image of heaven or hell, they are nevertheless true apprehensions of a hidden reality which changes only in form. At the very end of this chapter, al-Baghdādī describes how the relationship between the image, the imagination and the state of the soul progresses, mapping this progression onto his psychological framework which we have outlined:

[214] Al-Baghdādī, *Tuḥfat al-barara*, 28.

> And the fact of the matter is that the power of the imagination (*khayālīyya*) which is stored and placed in the world of humanness, is an instrument which most people command with their will. And if the governance of the ego or Satan dominate it, it is used [by them] it in corroboration with their natures, and the visions which are induced through it are of [the same class] as fanciful dreams (*aḍghāth*) which are not comprehensible. And if the governance of the spirit, the vicegerent of God on His earth, dominates it, then he may use it according to his desire, and [the spirit] informs the wayfarer through [the imagination] about the hidden world. And if the governance of God dominates it… then He, The Real, praise be to him, makes it an intermediary between the hidden and the manifest, and the servant perceives with [the imagination] the truths of hidden things. And as long as it is in the workings of the spirit, the disciple requires the shaykh to know the realities of visions. And if the governance of The Real takes possession, he no longer requires anything but Him, so just as He shows him a vision, He inspires him with its reality [and meaning].[215]

Al-Baghdādī here presents the full progression of visions in symbiosis with the spiritual progression of the individual. In each stage the imagination is aligned with the soul and the visions become clearer and more comprehensible as one ascends, culminating in the reception of clear direct truths which are immediately understood once the soul becomes the throne of God. Moreover, al-Baghdādī's assertion that the imagination is an intermediary between the divine and creation asserts its theophanic and prophetic role, manifesting spiritual truths at various levels of perfection depending on the degree to which the soul reflects God's essence and attributes. To go back to the earlier metaphor of the heart as a mirror, the realities are represented to the mind by the imagination after being reflected in the mirror of the heart. The forms vary in clarity depending on the soul's purification, when it is purified they become literal representations either through the medium of the imagination or directly from the spirit.

[215] Al-Baghdādī, *Tuḥfat al-barara*, 28.

This scheme is repeated in a much more abbreviated form by al-Baghdādī's disciple, Najm al-Dīn al-Rāzī, in his *Mirṣād al-'ibād*. Here we are given examples of dreams at the various stages which al-Baghdādī outlines. These examples are taken from the Qur'an as al-Rāzī explains that the unclear dream is likened to that perceived by the king who imprisoned Joseph, the dream in the state of the spirit is that which Joseph himself experienced when beholding the stars, and the true literal vision is equated with Abraham's dream where he is told to sacrifice his son, explaining that it had no need of explanation and interpretation.[216] In fact al-Rāzī's entire chapter on visions in the *Mirṣād* is heavily indebted to al-Baghdādī's *Tuḥfa.* Clear parallels with al-Baghdādī's cosmology are seen in his detailing of visions, and much of al-Baghdādī's discussion is repeated here.[217]

In comparison to the *Mirṣād*, al-Baghdādī's *Tuḥfa* has not received much attention for its systematisation of oneirology. We have shown here that the *Tuḥfa* is an invaluable source for understanding Kubrawī dream theory and works like the *Mirṣād.* Al-Baghdādī's psychology is incredibly important for understanding not just the *Mirṣād* but the works of other Kubrawī authors and later Sufi works which drew on the works of Kubrawīs who were influenced by the *Tuḥfa.* Our analysis of al-Baghdādī's oneiric theory is therefore an important step towards understanding the development of Sufi thought in this regard.

2.iv. The vision of colourless light

One of the defining characteristics of Kubrawī thought is its focus on detailing the visions of coloured lights, a topic which also features in al-Baghdādī's *Tuḥfa* though only

[216] Al-Rāzī, *Mirṣād* 287-288.

[217] Al-Rāzī, *Mirṣād* 287-288.

briefly. For al-Baghdādī, the coloured lights also adhere to this framework of dreams and visions as well as his micro-cosmology. They are also described by al-Baghdādī as God's lights of beauty and majesty. They progress from dark opaque colours to lighter, more translucent colours ending in a colourless white light.

White is significant here for a number of reasons. Throughout our analysis it has been shown that al-Baghdādī describes of visions as veils (*ḥijāb*). The term indicates that though the visions represent God to some extent, the very presence of an image is ultimately a barrier to the goal of the Sufi since God cannot be contained in an image. Hence, every vision of light is in some way an imperfect theophany of God. God's pure colourless light is refracted off of the "prism" of the soul so that it produces a colour based on the extent to which the soul has been perfected.

A vision of God is surely the ultimate vision, yet an image itself is an obstruction. Symbolic images of God fall short of representing him by their very presence which restricts God to a specific form, indicating influence of the ego or spirit over the soul which bar God's dominance over it. Al-Baghdādī frequently makes use of the tradition that God has seventy thousand veils of light and darkness, stressing that both the light of the spirit and the darkness of the ego are veils for God.[218] Here, these veils are represented in colours whereas colourless light represents completion.

While cultivating these images helps the Sufi progress due to their transformative effects on the soul, ultimately they must be transcended to actualise the attributes of God. In the beginning and intermediary stages of the journey images are necessary in order for the Sufi to dislocate himself from his ego and conceive of it as a separate entity. As long as the lights maintain some colour, the Sufi is perceiving an altered vision of God, obstructed by either the ego or spirit. The goal of the Sufi is to move

[218] Al-Baghdādī, *Tuḥfat al-barara,* 4.

beyond these coloured lights to the absence of coloured light. Hence, the duality represented by a vision, which was useful in the initial stages of transcending the ego, is a hindrance to completion. Al-Baghdādī describes the Sufi's visionary progression in seven stages in his 5th chapter on *dhikr* and seclusion which will be paraphrased here:

> 1- Experiencing the intelligibles of the intellect (*al-ma'ānī al-'aqlīyya).*
>
> 2- Delight in the truths of the attributes of the heart.
>
> 3- Absorption in the visions of the innermost heart.
>
> 4- The manifestation of the lights of beauty (*jamāl).*
>
> 5- Loss of consciousness (*walha)* due to the proximity of the divine.
>
> 6- The erasure of experiencing the manifestations of the lights of beauty.
>
> 7- Annihilation (*fanā')* [due to the awe] of what is impressed upon him by the attributes of majesty (*jalāl*).[219]

Here the penultimate step to annihilation and completion is described by al-Baghdādī as the erasure of the coloured lights. In Kubrā's work this penultimate stage is described as the "forgetting of duality." Duality (*ithnayniyya*) here is equated to the manifestation of the lights of beauty, while forgetting duality and passing into unity is equivalent to al-Baghdādī's final stage of annihilation. Kubrā's work, expresses this in four stages rather than seven:

> 1- Seeking the beloved.
>
> 2- The soul's devotion to the beloved.
>
> 3- Forgetting duality (*nisyān al-ithnayniya*).
>
> 4- Passing away into unity (*al-fanā' fī al waḥdāniyya*).[220]

[219] Al-Baghdādī, *Tuḥfat al-barara,* 20.

[220] David Martin, 'Return to the One', 239.

Hence while the notion of duality which accompanies the perception of the lights is a step towards completion for the initiate and advanced, it must be overcome as the ultimate goal of the Sufi, to manifest the attributes of God should be characterised by a completely pure soul, lacking any colour. Thus, what Kubrā terms here as forgetting duality involves the "erasure of the lights of the attributes of beauty" for al-Baghdādī. Kubrā also details two levels of annihilation which are relevant to the stratification of the faculties of the soul found in the *Tuḥfa.* Kubrā states in his *Fawā'iḥ* that:

> Annihilation is of two types, one from the attributes [of man] and into the attributes of God, and that is the annihilation in singularity (*fardāniyya*). And the other is the annihilation from [man's] attributes into [God's essence], and that is the annihiliation of unity. And if the essence manifests, so does awe... and it is as if [the wayfarer] nears death.[221]

This description of annihiliation is relevant to al-Baghdādī's discussion of the heart and innermost heart. The innermost heart is equated with the essence while the heart is equated with the attributes in the *Tuḥfa.* The two tiers of annihilation are representative of the distinction between these faculties of the soul which gain the distinct roles of determining man's essence (found in the innermost heart) and attributes (found in the heart) in the *Tuḥfa* and determine the experience and erasure of the coloured lights. Najm al-Dīn al-Rāzī's *Mirṣād* can also add to our understanding of the stage of erasure here, Hamid Algar translates the passage from the *Mirṣād* as follows:

> As for the attributes of splendor, when they manifest in the station of the effacement of the effacement, the imperiousness of the awe of divinity and the severity of the majesty of eternity, a black light is witnessed that dispenses man from all need of other than

[221] Kubrā, *Fawā'iḥ,* 178.

> God, causes him to abide in God, and gives life and death. For with the appearance of this light the supreme talisman is broken and all vague images are dispersed.[222]

The phrase to "abide in God" which al-Rāzī uses here is paralleled by al-Baghdādī's notion of "travelling within God" which is seen throughout the *Tuḥfa.* It is equated with his definition of *intihā',* which signifies attaining the final stages of the path. Here the term is directly related to manifesting the attributes of God. Travelling "within" God occurs in the *Tuḥfa* as an expression which accompanies the manifestation of God's attributes. Al-Rāzī clearly adopts this notion from al-Baghdādī, as the erasure of colour for him also represents the penultimate step to completion.

The use of black light here is somewhat unexpected since for al-Baghdādī it is white not black which indicates the erasure of vision.[223] Yet both lights can be described as an absence of colour and are in keeping with the progression of visionary colours. The reasoning of al-Rāzī's passage is the same as al-Baghdādī's in that to achieve the manifestation of the attributes of God, one's visions must move beyond the coloured lights. The *Tuḥfa* is replete with examples of people who were misled or trapped in a lower state of the spirit and barred from reaching the Presence of Godliness due to their love of such experiences and their desire to experience these spiritual lights and visions. Examples that show that the progression of spiritual lights parallels Sufi practice and the manifestation of the attributes of God and that remaining within the lights and veils of the spirit is a trap are also common in the text.[224]

Visions therefore correlate with the progression of the individual from base animalistic attributes to the attributes of God. These manifestations of God's attributes were described by al-Baghdādī as being imprinted in a mirror. He also described man's soul

---

[222] Al-Rāzī, *Mirṣād,* 302.

[223] The political significance of this difference will be explained in chapter 5.

[224] Al-Baghdādī, *Tuḥfat al-barara,* 9.

as a mirror to God's essence and attributes which are not the same nor different to God's essence and attributes, just as the reflection of sunlight in a mirror is not the sun itself.[225] In this analogy the mirror which is the heart manifests the attributes to different levels of perfection depending on the degree of polish it has attained. The coloured lights are therefore dependent upon this conception of the heart. Hence, the experience of coloured lights adheres to the same theoretical framework which we have outlined.

Oddly enough, we receive the clearest indication of the need to transcend these visionary colours from one of the earliest and shortest chapters of the *Tuḥfa* which prescribes the clothing practices of the Sufi community. Here al-Baghdādī explains that the disciple should wear dark blue and the Sufi shaykhs had chosen this colour for three reasons, because it can bare dirt well and will not distract the person from his duties, because it indicates a state of mourning over past sins and wasted time, and finally because "it is of the habit of the seeker to wear clothes which are coloured with the colours of the lights he witnesses."[226]

He goes on to explain that dark blue is the most unclear colour, as it is tainted with the darkness of the ego and compares it to smoke, evoking the image Kubrā described of a consumptive fire. He describes these colours as veils, and as the disciple rises in his spiritual growth these colours change, green being the final colour of the veils of the ego. But it is not only the ego that acts as the veil, the heart and spirit are also veils and also produce their own coloured lights. Al-Baghdādī goes on to assert that there are many other colours, listing indigo, yellow and red, unfortunately he does not detail which states they represent and asserts to the reader that his aim here is not to detail

[225] Al-Baghdādī, *Tuḥfat al-barara,* 14.
[226] Al-Baghdādī, *Tuḥfat al-barara,* 4.

each and every colour.[227] He explains that all of these colours represent degrees of perfection, explaining:

> One of the shaykhs[228] has said that green is the veil with no veil behind it. And this means that there is no veil of the ego behind it, for the veils are not [solely] characterised by darkness, for God has seventy thousand veils of light and darkness... And that is because just as the darkness of the ego is a veil, so too are the lights of the heart, secret, and spirit. And just as the colours of the soul differ, depending on its condition, becoming at times blue, and at times green, so too do the conditions of the lights of the heart differ depending on its degree of completion and the descent of the spirit onto it. So at times it becomes white and at times it becomes yellow, or it becomes red... And it has been the custom of those shaykhs, who have excelled in the path, to wear garments which are coloured with the colours of their stations and visions... and the shaykhs choose white (for themselves), and agree between them that the wearing of white is of a greater station than blue. And they do not allow for those who are not shaykhs to wear the white fineries. And that is because white has no colour, and so it is not permissible... for those who have not attained annihilation *(fanā')* of [their] humanity and perfected their servitude. And for the disciple, a changing of their image and form has been prescribed [by the shaykhs].[229]

Here the colours of visions parallel the dominion of the ego, spirit or God over the heart which determines the actualisation of attributes. This results in a stratification of the Sufi path from initiate to shaykh with detailed states inbetween. The use of the term annihilation here shows the accordance between white light and al-Baghdādī's description of the erasure of the visionary lights, reinforcing the hierarchical conception of visionary progression. When the human begins to actualise the attributes of God, the need for this visionary intermediary ceases as God comes to be the only

[227] Al-Baghdādī, *Tuḥfat al-barara,* 4.
[228] This refers to Najm al-Dīn Kubrā.
[229] Al-Baghdādī, *Tuḥfat al-barara,* 4.

faculty commanding the human heart and body. This is stated explicitly in the 9th chapter of the *Tuḥfa* where al-Baghdādī describes completion with respect to attributes in the following:

> And God extracts him... from the opaqueness of the ego and the lights of the spirit, and there is found within him neither light nor darkness from any of the attributes of humanness. And he is not heavenly or earthly, for he stands with God.[230]

Hence, the visionary theophany of God's beatific light (*tajallī anwār al-jamāl*) in al-Baghdādī's thought indicates the persistence of duality or *ithnayniyya,* as Kubrā put it. Visionless-ness indicates union since it is the absence of theophany, representing the soul's return it to its primordial condition as a perfect mirror to the divine. If understood from the perspective of al-Baghdādī's micro-cosmological scheme, theophany is always a representative of imperfection as it presupposes the persistence of some obscurant manifest bodily faculty or hidden spiritual faculty which holds sway over the soul. The lights represent micro-cosmology, as the densest and most opaque colours are found at the bottom of the hierarchy while complete translucency is found at the top, indicating the soul as a perfect mirror to God.

3. Physical and spiritual sensations

From what we have presented so far, it may seem as though al-Baghdādī maintains a dualistic notion of the world by upholding its division into the hidden and manifest. His psychology relies on this distinction between the hidden and manifest in order to describe the human being's composition as an exception to this which partakes of both worlds. Though it may seem so at first glance, the conception of the world, or at least

[230] Al-Baghdādī, *Tuḥfat al-barara,* 39.

the soul's perception of it, is complicated by al-Baghdādī's discussion of physical and spiritual sensation. Here we see that al-Baghdādī renders the manifest world a representation of the hidden world through his discussion of the manifest and spiritual senses.

The dualistic character of al-Baghdādī's cosmology is shown to be only a matter of perception, as the distinction between the hidden and manifest is revealed to be a consequence of the inability of the perceiver to overcome what al-Baghdādī terms, the "distance" (*bayān*) between his own hiddenness and manifest-ness. Meaning that if the soul remains under the influence of the ego, its perceptions will stop at the manifest bodily senses, oblivious to the spiritual truth represented by the physical world.

Unfortunately, al-Baghdādī does not provide much in the way of explaining what the spiritual senses are, or how they are heard simultaneously with physical sounds. Towards the end of his discussion on spiritual sounds al-Baghdādī explains that one can understand bird song, the ringing of bells and the creaking doors and translate this into comprehensible human speech. However, he himself indicates that he does not intend to explain this stating that "those who have not freed themselves from their human-ness will find this assertion abhorrent, and he who has not experienced [this] does not know."[231] Al-Baghdādī then does not necessarily intend to provide an explanation for this. Though these notions only partially explained, this study will attempt to account for the relationship between the physical and spiritual senses through an analysis of the text. This study must also discuss al-Baghdadī's conception of beauty here since it details the transformative effects of visions and music which are relevant to the stratification of the Sufi path.

[231] Al-Baghdādī, *Tuḥfat al-barara,* 43.

In Sufism, the divine attributes had been traditionally divided into those pertaining to God's beauty and those pertaining to His majesty.[232] Kubrā embellished the meanings of these terms, using them to describe the coloured visions and dream images he experienced as representations of the beauty and majesty of God. The title of Kubrā's magnum opus, the *Fawā'iḥ al-jamāl wa-fawātiḥ al-jalāl* testifies to the central role that the concepts of beauty (*jamāl*) and majesty (*jalāl*) play in Kubrawī Sufism. We have seen that al-Baghdādī continues to emphasise the two terms by referring to the manifestation of the lights of God's beauty and the passing away into visionless-ness through majesty. A contemporary of al-Baghdādī, Rūzbihān al-Baqlī also emphasised beauty in some of his work, and like Kubrā offers visionary autobiographical accounts which emphasise beauty in visionary scenes, often poetically described. Rūzbihān for example, bears some similarities to the Kubrawīs in his descriptions of visionary theophanies, both of the majestic and beautiful attributes of God as his "clothing" (*libās*), and we have seen similar ideas in al-Baghdādī's work, for example employing the term *libās* in reference to the imagination which clothes spiritual truths or attributes of God with symbolic imagery.[233]

Unlike Kubrā, al-Baghdādī's discussion of beauty seems to focus on physical sensations rather than spiritual visions and dreams. We turn mainly to the phenomenon of sound in order to investigate the role of beauty in al-Baghdādī's work. In his discussion of audition (*samā'*), the practice of listening to music in order to induce spiritual experiences, al-Baghdādī allocates for beauty a central role for the spiritual progression of initiates and accords physical sensation a role in conveying spiritual truths and God's speech to the advanced Sufi. Despite this focus on physical sensations, al-Baghdādī's framework here is the same as that which underpin his understanding of visions and dreams.

[232] Ernst, *Rūzbihān Baqlī,* 73.

[233] Ernst, *Rūzbihān Baqlī,* 35.

Al-Baghdādī conceives of physical sensation as having a similar role to that of the imagination, as a medium which represents spiritual realities through particulars. Outlining al-Baghdādī's psychological framework reveals that perceiving the truth of a spiritual vision depends upon the degree to which the soul is purified. This theory applies to physical sensation as well. The notion that the perception of the truths of physical sensation is dependent on the purification of the soul also reveals the point at which the *Tuḥfa* overcomes a seemingly dualistic account of the world. As such the truth of physical sensation also parallels the progression of attributes and visions.

3.i. Perceiving sounds

Audition is a practice which dates back to a much earlier period in the history of Sufism, and by al-Baghdādī's time it was a well-established Sufi ritual. However, it seems to have always courted controversy, with some religious scholars denouncing the practice as a sin and forbidding it. Prior to al-Baghdādī, al-Ghazālī had mounted a formidable defence of the permissibility of audition in his *Iḥyā'*.[234] Al-Baghdādī is clearly well versed in this section of the *Iḥyā'*, as he summarises its main argument for the permissibility of audition in the *Tuḥfa* by explaining that al-Ghazālī reduces the opposition to audition to the claim that the practice is a disagreeable frivolity, and summarises al-Ghazālī's response as showing that such a statement cannot apply to audition.[235]

Al-Baghdādī's rather brief summary reveals that he is not heavily invested in justifying the permissibility of the practice from a legal point of view and is happy to refer the reader to al-Ghazālī instead. His primary aim then is to discuss the theoretical

[234] See al-Ghazālī, *Iḥyā'*, vol. 5.

[235] Al-Baghdādī, *Tuḥfat al-barara,* 45-46.

underpinnings of the practice. Turning to the final chapter of the *Tuḥfa*, we see that the same framework which characterised dreams and visions is extended to physical sensation. Al-Baghdādī states here that it is possible for man, when his heart is governed by God to perceive the true meanings of physical sensations. The bodily world manifests a spiritual truth, but the ability to perceive this is only possible when the soul is purified.

After a brief discussion of the permissibility of keeping company with rulers, al-Baghdādī focuses the remainder of his 10th chapter on the topic of audition. He begins by expanding upon a concept which was not unknown to Sufis, specifically that the Sufi had two sets of each sensory organ, one set for perceiving the manifest world, while the other perceived the hidden.[236] Al-Baghdādī begins his discussion of audition by developing this notion:

> Just as God created for man a bodily frame (*qālib*) and spirit, so did he create for his five senses, which are sound, sight, taste, smell and touch, a form and spirit. And their form is what clings to [man's] frame, and their spirit is what clings to his heart. And when the form (*qālib)* shares [its rank] with animals and beasts, the images [man] receives from the senses are those which are shared between man and animal. And for the form of man, there are shared [senses which he shares with other beings]. And for the heart, which is specific to man, is the spirit of the senses which is also specific to man. He who does not have from the world of mankind anything apart from characteristics of the manifest senses, and forbids the truth of the spirit of the manifest senses, which are the realities of the hidden senses, is like the animals and beasts.[237]

Here man is either capable of perceiving the manifest with his manifest being alone, in which case he is like any other animal, or he is capable of perceiving it with his spiritual

[236] Izutsu, 'Theophanic Ego', 29.
[237] Al-Baghdādī, *Tuḥfat al-barara,* 42.

senses which are particular to human beings and raise him above the animal state. These spiritual senses are also described by al-Baghdādī as the reality of the senses (*ḥaqīqat al-ḥiss*). The physical and spiritual senses are in some way linked but al-Baghdādī does not provide us with much detail regarding the details of this connection which we must infer from his discussion. Al-Baghdādī continues to describe the relation between these manifest and spiritual senses in the following passage:

> And with [man's] manifest senses he understands the precious things [of the manifest world] and with the true senses, he apprehends the realities of the hidden. God has said of the characteristics of the unbelievers: You see them looking at you but they do not perceive. Meaning, and God knowing, that they used to look at the image of the Prophet, peace be upon him, with their outer senses but they did not perceive the image of prophecy with the true spiritual senses. And God said that, "they are removed from hearing." And there is no doubt that they were not removed from their outer sense of hearing, but that they were removed from the true, spiritual sense of hearing which is the spirit of the outer sense of hearing. So they used to hear the Qur'an as a combination of sounds that was particular and specific. And so it was heard by the outer sense and they understood from it the words of the ancients, and they did not perceive with real hearing which is the spirit of manifest hearing, for they were removed from it, so they [could not] apprehend the word of God, praise be to him, in order to believe in him.[238]

Here al-Baghdādī draws heavily from the Qur'an in order to justify his interpretation of a distinct spiritual hearing, which is dependent on the presence of a physical stimulus, providing the hearer with spiritual truths that the physical event represents through particulars. The hearer must move beyond the particulars and sense the truth of the sounds in order to realise the truth of the sensation. Hence, while the perception of the physical particulars and the spiritual meanings seem distinct, perceiving the spiritual

[238] Al-Baghdādī, *Tuḥfat al-barara,* 42.

sound is dependent on the presence of the manifest sound. The physical event becomes a particular form or image which manifests a spiritual truth. The ability to perceive the spiritual truth is in turn dependent on the rank of the soul and the degree of its purity.

A similar notion is found in al-Ghazālī's work, though this refers to the imagination rather than physical sensation, the parallel is nonetheless appropriate since both sensations depend upon the body. In his discussion of prophecy al-Ghazālī argues that prophets have no choice but to speak to people through images which if considered for their literal form alone will be found to be false, but whose interpretation is true. Al-Ghazālī then reveals that these images are the same type as those which the imagination produces in dreams, because the majority of people are "asleep" and this is the only way the prophets can communicate truths to them.[239]

This reasoning accords with al-Baghdādī's notion of the physical senses, as the physical form is not considered true in itself but is a symbolic representation of truth, and can move the soul to arrive at a spiritual sensations of truth. Al-Baghdādī's Qur'anic example, describing those who do not believe as unable to understand the meaning behind their physical sensation of God's word, echoes al-Ghazālī who refers to the images which God sends through the prophets. For al-Ghazālī, the meanings of these symbols will only be revealed to most people in the afterlife. Al-Ghazālī's thought might also be the origin of al-Baghdādī's peculiar usage of the term "the spirit of the sense" (*rūḥ al-ḥiss)*, as al-Ghazālī describes the meaning behind the imaginative images which prophets convey through scripture as the spirit (*ruḥ*) of the image.[240] Al-Baghdādī also equates the spiritual senses with the term realities and identifies the heart as their receptor, revealing the importance of the reception of Ghazālian thought here. This indicates that the spiritual sounds which are sensed by the heart are equivalent to the

[239] Treiger, *Inspired Knowledge*, 90-91.

[240] Treiger, *Inspired Knowledge*, 91.

intelligibles which are perceived by the rational soul. This equivalence between realities and spiritual senses is made clearer with al-Baghdādī's assertion that spiritual sound is independent of the bodily particulars which represent it:

> And in the beginning of the emergence of this [spiritual] sound, the workings of the [bodily senses] dominate him, for it is the [spiritual sense's] outer shell and its bodily form... And if he attains completion and matures to the point of finality, [the spiritual sense] pervades at all times. For its true source is above the world of time and place. And if the seeker turns to the cosmos he hears the glorification of [God by the created] things clearly, for there is no thing that does not glorify and praise Him. And if [the seeker] is abducted by God from the cosmos, he hears the speech of God, praise be to him, and his days are spent absorbed in audition (*samā'*).

Hence it seems that what al-Baghdādī intends by the term spiritual senses is that they are the meanings behind the symbolic representations of the physical senses. They are spiritual realities which are sensed and experienced rather than intellected. These realities are presented to the soul through a spiritual sensory organ which has a connection to a corresponding physical organ. They derive meanings from the physical world in accordance with the perfection of the soul. The concept is not fully explained as al-Baghdādī maintains that these spiritual meanings are sensed as sounds. It remains somewhat difficult to understand how two sounds could be heard at the same time, however we will attempt to provide an explanation for this as best as we can in the coming discussions when we come to discuss al-Baghdādī's assertion that completion is found in perceiving both the physical and spiritual sounds. First we must turn to the role of beauty in the *Tuḥfa* to grasp the nature of these spiritual sensations more fully.

3.ii. Beauty, music and the assent of the soul

Despite the influence of al-Ghazālī's thought here, there are important discussions in al-Baghdādī's text which al-Ghazālī avoids discussing in depth. Although al-Ghazālī provides an extensive discussion of audition, he does not seem to discuss the role of beauty in music and poetry, declaring that this pleasure is one of God's mysteries which cannot be explained.[241] In contrast to this, beauty plays a central role in moving the soul to a state where it is receptive to spiritual senses and truths for al-Baghdādī.

However, given the ambiguity surrounding al-Baghdādī's notion of spiritual senses, we will need to find parallels between al-Baghdādī's thought and other theories regarding the role of the senses and beauty. Al-Baghdādī's discussion offers a description of the psychological effects of perceiving beauty and provides hints as to where we may look for parallels. Al-Baghdādī turns to the aesthetics of music, granting physical beauty an important ability to suspend the conscious mind from directing the senses, allowing the spiritual senses to be perceived, and facilitating the transformation of the soul to a greater condition.

We may find some clues in discussions of beauty in the context of poetry. This had been an area of investigation by previous thinkers, and al-Baghdādī's discussion bears some parallels to these older discussions. Furthermore, part of the audition ceremony would undoubtedly have featured the recitation of poetry even though al-Baghdādī seems to focus on music in his discussion. There are countless examples of audition ceremonies featuring lyrics which are mentioned and recorded in a vast number of Sufi works, and we can safely assume that this would have been a feature of any audition ceremony of the time.[242]

[241] Avery, *The Psychology,* 156.

[242] See: Avery, *The Psychology.*

Avicenna described poetry as imaginative speech and argued for its usefulness in conveying truths through the imagination, despite the inability of the imagination to arrive at truths on its own. For Avicenna poetry conveyed knowledge through syllogisms, a weaker form of reasoning than demonstrative proofs. However, Avicenna afforded the beauty involved in imagination a role in the reception of knowledge, explaining that although the truths of poetry are not demonstrated, the soul assents and yields to them as a result of feeling wonder and pleasure.[243] Avicenna justifies poetry for the sake of it by assigning an important role for pleasure, wonder, and awe, which accompany the experience of listening to poetry. The role of the imagination and physical sensations here, though important, is only as a means to knowledge and not knowledge itself. Wonder and pleasure here take the place of demonstrative proofs in forcing the soul to assent to a truth.[244]

Al-Ghazālī had a similar approach to Avicenna when it came to poetics, though unlike Avicenna, al-Ghazālī discussed the topic in the context of religion, and emphasised the need for syllogistic truths while not affording much of a role to pleasure.[245] Despite al-Baghdādī's reliance on al-Ghazālī and the frequency with which he quotes from the *Iḥyā'* in this 10th chapter, he nevertheless parallels Avicenna more strongly by emphasising the role of beauty and pleasure in causing the soul to assent to higher truths. This is seen in the following passage which details the heart's assent to spiritual truths through the medium of physical sounds:

> We have said that bodily sensed sound is attached to the heart and the distance between [the heart and this sound] is closer than the distance between manifest bodily sight and true spiritual sight. For this reason, the effects of outer sound on the heart are produced faster… Do we not see that one is perhaps taken from consciousness if he

[243] Kemal, *The Philosophical Poetics,* 95; 104; 111.
[244] Kemal, *The Philosophical Poetics,* 124-125.
[245] Kemal, *The Philosophical Poetics,* 220.

> hears some voices which are pleasant and harmoniously tuned, whether he is a person of the heart or not, and this condition of being taken away from consciousness is not achieved by looking at beautiful things with the bodily sensation of sight. This is true hearing, for it may be that the servant of God takes pleasure in it and does not feel that pleasure but instead listens to things with his heart and no longer hears directly from that thing with the bodily [senses], for the heart becomes that which hears, experiencing the realities of his hearing.[246]

Like Avicenna's discussion of beauty in poetry causing the soul to assent to a truth beyond the combination of particular images which emerge in the imagination, al-Baghdādī asserts that the beauty of music causes the soul to experience a spiritual truth which is greater than the mere combination of physical sounds in music. This parallel is evinced by the relationship between the heart and the realities, which are equivalent to the rational soul and intelligibles. For Avicenna the information is in the communication of intelligible truths through poetic syllogisms which were not literally true in themselves but made sense when taking the meaning of the poem into account. For al-Baghdādī, the combination of beautiful harmoniously tuned sounds (*al-aṣwāṭ al-ṭayyiba mutanāsibat al-awzān*) induces a state which allows the listener to experience spiritual sensations. Al-Baghdādī emphasises the physical beauty of sound by referring to the tuning and harmony of the music rather than imaginative speech. Yet the role of beauty here is remains similar to that of syllogism in language. While Avicenna focuses on beauty in language, and its ability to inspire shock, awe or pleasure, al-Baghdādī focuses on the physical sensation, emphasising that one's consciousness is taken by listening to these pleasant, melodic and complimentary sounds.

Al-Baghdādī expands upon this notion of beauty then by according it an important role in inducing a liminal state and suspending the consciousness of the mind and the outer

[246] Al-Baghdādī, *Tuḥfat al-barara,* 43.

senses. This allows the soul an opportunity to rise above its bodily concerns. Beauty causes the soul to enter a state which is similar to the state induced through remembrance rituals in seclusion. This was related to the production of visions, by suspending thought impressions as well as the bodily faculties of the soul. The experience of beauty here is considered powerful enough, to move even the non-Sufi to this spiritual perception. Hence, al-Baghdādī states that even if one has not progressed spiritually and is not a Sufi or, as he puts it a "person of the heart," they may still be affected by the experience, so that they hear with their "true" spiritual senses.[247]

However, physical beauty remains useful only in as much as it causes the soul to assent to higher spiritual states and truths, it is not truth in itself since as we shall see, all physical sensations bear a spiritual truth which the Sufi must learn to perceive without the aid of this experience of physical beauty. It is important to note that al-Baghdādī defends and speaks very highly of audition insofar as it is useful for the beginner. The advanced Sufi however is not in need of the practice and perceives the spiritual sensation at all times.

For Avicenna, the universal truths of the intellect can be grasped by the soul without the use of the imagination or the bodily senses. However, if the soul is dominated by its lower faculties, it can return to the imagination which provides a starting point of particulars from which the soul can abstract universal truths. For Avicenna, the imagination is a starting point for achieving the higher truth, preparing it for the reception of intelligibles. Once this is achieved, the soul does not require returning to the imagination unless it regresses and is diverted from its higher functions.[248] The role of the imagination here is similar to the role of the physical senses and beauty in the *Tuḥfa.* Physical sensations provide the initiate with a useful starting point, but spiritual

[247] Al-Baghdādī, *Tuḥfat al-barara,* 43.

[248] Druart, 'Body in Arabic Philosophy', 332-333.

sensations are not necessarily bound to these particulars and can be sensed independently from them.

With this in mind, al-Baghdādī attempts to craft a hierarchy of experiences of beauty. Al-Baghdādī states that hearing is for the initiate and vision is for the advanced.[249] The completed Sufi is in not in need of these experiences however. He is able to experience truths directly without the aid of the imaginative faculty or the outer senses. Al-Baghdādī refers to his prophetology in order to argue this case. Al-Baghdādī explains that Moses only received the speech of God and was denied a vision of him when he asked for it [Qur'an 7: 143]. On the other hand, the prophet Muhammad is associated with visions, presumably referring to his ascension through the heavens. Al-Baghdādī explains that Moses is destined to follow Muhammad to achieve completion. This explains his statement that the path begins with hearing and completion (*intihā'*) is attained with sight. In this way al-Baghdādī ranks the transformative effects of visions above sounds.[250]

For al-Baghdādī, physical sight is an experience which does not affect the human heart as easily as sound and is not likely to cause the soul to assent to a higher state. Physical sound is described as being "closer" to the heart in comparison to what al-Baghdādī describes as the "distance" of sight. Towards the end of the *Tuḥfa,* al-Baghdādī quotes al-Hujwīrī's *Kashf,* repeating a Sufi tradition where the shaykh al-Hamadānī arranges an audition session for al-Jallābī, informing him at the end that eventually there will be no difference between audition and the sound of a crow for him. Al-Baghdādī then goes on to explain that this is because the power of audition to affect the soul remains strong as long as one does not experience visions (*mushāhada*) and that one should not become

[249] Al-Baghdādī, *Tuḥfat al-barara,* 42.
[250] Al-Baghdādī, *Tuḥfat al-barara,* 42.

dependent on audition so that it becomes a barrier to completion.[251] Hence, there is a sense that in completion beautiful stimuli, whether imagined, physical, or spiritual, are no longer required for spiritual progression.

This hierarchical arrangement reflects the stratification of Kubrawī thought in al-Baghdādī's work. Beauty induces in the Sufi a condition whereby he is more receptive to spiritual truths. These experiences affect a change in the Sufi, resulting in the attainment of a higher spiritual rank. Najm al-Dīn al-Rāzī also points to the need for spiritual experiences to transcend certain stations, stating that this is one of the three benefits of spiritual visions.[252] This begins with audible experiences, is advanced with visionary experiences and ends in the irrelevance of physical and mental images as a transformative tool along the path, since after achieving perfection the realities which physical and visionary beauty reveal are experienced directly at all times. This accords with the significance of the colourless white light of God seen in completion, which represents the absence of images and the complete purification of the soul.

There is an important underlying reason to this hierarchical relationship between seeing and hearing which points to the stratification and emerging self-consciousness of the Kubrawī community. The increasing attention to visions in this period in Sufism reflects the transition of Sufism from communities to orders. Given the emphasis of the Kubrawiyya on understanding and detailing visions, this may also serve to assert the value of Kubrawī Sufism over other forms of Sufi practice which would have shared similar traditions of audition but whose visionary practices are less detailed. This emphasis of visions as a necessary experience towards completion seems to grant the Kubrawiyya an advantage in theoretical exposition as well as practice.

[251] Al-Baghdādī, *Tuḥfat al-barara,* 48-49.

[252] Al-Rāzī, *Mirṣād,* 293.

3.iii. Transcending the spirit and returning to physical sensation

That the spiritual senses allow the perceiver to apprehend realities, and are independent of the physical senses is made clear by al-Baghdādī as he describes them as "above time and place."[253] Despite this independence however, al-Baghdādī is not willing to render the bodily sounds completely unnecessary. Though it may seem at times as if the body is simply a hindrance and something which ought to be transcended, it is necessary for al-Baghdādī's definition of completion which depends on the proper command of the bodily faculties. Regarding sensation, al-Baghdādī terms this "removing the distance" between man's spiritual and bodily faculties. Here he reveals more about the relationship between physical and spiritual sensation:

> And [listening with the heart alone and not in conjunction with the outer senses] is due to the distance between the manifest and the hidden [within themselves], and this distance is not lifted at all, except with struggling and discipline. So if the person hears a sound, whether it be harmonious or not, he receives from that sound the apprehension [of the particulars] of sensation. And if he also has with him the spiritual sense of hearing, meaning true hearing, he receives from it two lots. The first lot is related to the perception of the sense-able [bodily] hearing, while the second lot is the perception of true hearing. And true hearing does not stop at what strengthens it from the manifest sound, for it has in its own world, apprehensions which are without limit. And that is why one of the shaykhs[254] has said: in my heart there is a singer (*qawwāl*) who sings to me.[255]

Here, al-Baghdādī complicates the notion of spiritual sensation by subdividing the spiritual sound into that which is related to the outer senses and that which is above time and space. Hence, those who experience unconsciousness due to the physical

[253] Al-Baghdādī, *Tuḥfat al-barara,* 43.
[254] This phrase refers to Kubrā.
[255] Al-Baghdādī, *Tuḥfat al-barara,* 42-43.

sound through beauty and listen with their heart alone have not realised the full potential of spiritual hearing because they do not comprehend the truth of the physical sound. Part of the significance of the spiritual sound itself remains dependent on the presence of a physical sensation.

What al-Baghdādī means by "removing the distance" between the hidden and manifest aspects of man is directly related to Sufi training and progressing along the path in the above passage. Completion results in the greater hidden faculties of the soul commanding the body, thus bridging the distance entails the most noble aspect of man's soul, as a reflection of God, commanding the human body. This is directly related to the capacity for knowledge, since completion entailed coming to know all the microcosmic realities of man's composition which explains how the truths represented by the particulars of physical sounds are understood. Hence, we may venture an explanation of this notion by positing that for al-Baghdādī upon perfection, the microcosmic realities which correspond to the external realities are perfectly imprinted onto the mirror of the soul and this allows the Sufi to grasp the full truths of his physical experiences.

Al-Baghdādī grants physical hearing a connection to spiritual hearing by describing it as the outer layer of spiritual hearing. The physical sound has a meaning and a truth which is inaudible to those who have not advanced the soul's rank. Just as God's attributes are manifested by the perfected human soul through the body, so is God's speech, and the truths of the hidden world made apparent in the manifest world where they are represented by sensible manifestations. So al-Baghdādī returns our focus to the physical, and argues for its necessity as he continues to explain that when the distance between the manifest and hidden faculties of man is bridged, unintelligible sounds become translatable into human speech:

> And if the seeker hears a voice and his ear is prepared to receive his lot, and true hearing is his right, and if the distance between the manifest and hidden is lifted with striving and other acts [of worship], it is possible for the hearer to describe what he hears from his true sense of hearing from the various sounds like the slamming of doors, the voices of birds, the creaking of a well, with comprehensible and understandable speech (*kalāman mafhūman ma'lūm*).[256]

Here al-Baghdādī shows that knowledge acquired from physical experiences are dependent on the purification of the soul just as dreams and visions are. We had seen previously that a dream image symbolically represented the divine due to the presence of bodily and egoistic faculties which obscured the literal truths, while the more perfected soul sees a clear and direct literal truth in his vision due to the absence of bodily faculties. Here we see that the physical senses are intertwined with the soul in the same way, as the spiritual senses only grasp knowledge from the bodily world in accordance with the soul's purity. Physical sound manifests God's speech to degrees of truth depending on the state of the soul just as the theophanic visions manifested God in different colours according to the soul's purification. Al-Baghdādī makes this clear as he explains:

> And this sound, by which I mean the true spiritual sound, follows undoubtedly the reality of the heart, yet it is in the abode of the sense of the bodily form (*qālib*). And just as the person hears speech or a voice through the medium of his senses from whoever is present with him or is addressing him, so does the heart hear speech according to what is with it. For if [the heart] is with God it hears from God, and if it is with other than God then it hears from that other. And if the servant hears [a bodily] speech or voice and the heart is with God, the manifest sense of hearing hears that speech or voice from the one who speaks or remains silent, while the heart hears from that [bodily sound] the speech or command of God... And for that reason it may be that he

[256] Al-Baghdādī, *Tuḥfat al-barara,* 43.

> hears something and understands from it something else, so that he hears superficial speech and understands from that superficiality profundities.[257]

This provides an explanation to some common tropes in Sufi thought. The reference to hearing something profane and understanding a spiritual truth from it, echoes the writings of Rūzbihān for example who describes hearing a poetic verse about drunkenness and hangovers, yet understanding from it "ecstasies, kindness and speeches from the station of expansiveness" (*basṭ*).[258] Ernst explains in reference to this episode that for Rūzbihān even the most profane poetry could become a manifestation of a divine quality.[259]

For al-Baghdādī, perceiving the spiritual sensation with both its bodily and spiritual significance is a necessity for completion. This reasserts the significance of the bodily world and has important consequences for discussions of antinomianism and ecstatic states. The inability to comprehend the physical sound experienced represents a flawed and imperfect altered state which the Sufi should attempt to progress from. In these cases the Sufi may think that he has attained finality but is in fact simply unable to understand his experiences because he is too engrossed or overwhelmed by his spiritual sensations. This is apparent as al-Baghdādī continues:

> And if the distance [between manifest and hidden] is not lifted, it is not possible for [the seeker] to describe [that unintelligible sound] with any comprehensible [speech]. And it may be that he does not feel his own sense of hearing even if he hears it and if that [sound] changes his condition (*ḥālatihi*) in the manifest. And this is the condition of many of those who experience ecstatic states (*al-mawājīd*) who have found in their inner [being] audible messages which have been sent to their hearts and changed the

[257] Al-Baghdādī, *Tuḥfat al-barara,* 43.
[258] Ernst, *Rūzbihān Baqlī,* 73.
[259] Ernst, *Rūzbihān Baqlī,* 74.

attributes of their hearts. And that change led to a change in the manifest, yet they did not understand from that anything, nor did he apprehend any speech.

Al-Baghdādī characterises those who only perceive the spiritual sensation as incomplete due to their inability to apprehend the physical and spiritual sensation in tandem. Though their souls assent to a higher truth and they undergo a change in their attributes, they do not understand what it is they have experienced. The crucial point here is in marking out completion from the station of the spirit, since the Sufi should be master of both his physical and spiritual existence. As we shall see, this is related to the definition of shaykh-hood as it establishes that the shaykh must fulfil a prophetic role as an intermediary between God and his community, having his heart with God while attending to worldly affairs.

This notion does have precedent in the works of earlier Sufis. We can look to a similar idea found in ʻAmmār al-Bidlīsī's *Bahjat al-ṭā'ifa.* Al-Bidlīsī was one of Kubrā's teachers and is mentioned by Kubrā in the genealogy of his cloak of blessing.[260] His influence over the development of the Kubrawiyya has not been well documented, however it seems that some of his discussions are echoed in Kubrā's and al-Baghdādī's work. Al-Bidlīsī also dedicates significant discussions to Sufi psychology including visions and thought impressions. Although it is beyond the scope of this study, it is important to note that this points to some important parallels between al-Baghdādī and al-Bidlīsī's work, which could be significant for those who wish to understand the development of Kubrawī thought.

Al-Bidlīsī's discussion of visions in his *Bahjat al-ṭā'ifa* parallels al-Baghdādī's discussion of audition. Here al-Bidlīsī explains the need to comprehend the form of the vision as well as its immaterial origins. His discussion seems to drawa on al-Ghazālī's ideas, as al-

[260] Kubrā, *khirqa hazārmīkhī*, 164.

Bidlīsī relies on the notion of "power" (*qadar*) in this discussion. Al-Ghazālī employs these term as equivalents to the terms to the actor (*fā'il*), action (*fi'il*) and object which is acted upon (*maf'ūl*).[261] Al-Bidlīsī asserts that every vision has a *qādir,* which refers to the cause, or the one who has power, namely God. Every vision is also produced through a *qudra,* which is the creative power of God. While the vision itself is referred to as the *maqdūr,* which is the object which power is acted upon.

Al-Bidlīsī explains that these three steps which are involved in the creation of a thing can be perceived or comprehended by the Sufi. God, or the *qādir* as well as his creative power are perceived with the heart, while the *maqdūr* is perceived by what he describes as the physical eye because it is a part of the created world, or *dunyā.* He explains in this passage that those who perceive only the holder of power and the creative power are incomplete, and only the truly perfected perceives all three at once and attain complete knowledge in the perception of the vision.[262]

Al-Bidlīsī describes the incomplete Sufi in the same way that al-Baghdādī describes those who are unaware of the physical experience of hearing when experiencing ecstasy. Here Bidlīsī describes them as children who see but do not understand.[263] He goes on to explain that the incomplete Sufi's heart is overwhelmed by the vision so that it comes to "dominate" him (*ghalabat al-shuhūd 'alā al-qalb*), only perceiving the *qādir and qudra,* but ignoring the *maqdūr*. On the other hand the Sufi who has attained completion has a "stable" heart and is able to focus the physical eye "of his head" on the form of the vision. In this case, physical sight becomes characterised with the attribute of spiritual sight (*ittaṣafa al-baṣar bi-ṣifat al-baṣīra).*[264]

[261] See al-Ghazālī, *Tahāfut al-falāsifa,* 135-171.
[262] Al-Bidlīsī, *Bahjat al-ṭā'ifa,* 69.
[263] Al-Bidlīsī, *Bahjat al-ṭā'ifa,* 69.
[264] Al-Bidlīsī, *Bahjat al-ṭā'ifa,* 69.

This offers an explanation of the connection between bodily and spiritual sensation which is missing in al-Baghdādī's text. Al-Bidlīsī explains that the physical sensory organ acquires the ability to perceive spiritual sensations through purification of the soul. This is remarkably similar to al-Baghdādī's discussion of physical and spiritual sound. It also reveals that there is a connection between physical and spiritual sounds by explaining that the physical eye comes to acquire the characteristics of spiritual sight. Hence, though the physical and spiritual sensations are distinct, the ability to perceive the spiritual vision or sound is predicated on the ability to see and hear.

In this passage, physical sight is necessary for ensuring that the Sufis are not overwhelmed by their spiritual senses. For both thinkers, maintaining focus on the physical sensation represents a more complete state by grounding the Sufi and barring him from being overcome by ecstasy. Only by maintaining one's focus on the bodily sensation can one understand the spiritual meaning which it represents. This crafts a hierarchy of spiritual experience by characterising the intermediary condition as a detachment from the bodily world. It is above the perception of bodily particulars alone which is due to the domination of the ego over the soul, but below completion.

Hence al-Baghdādī's definition of completion requires the perception of the spiritual sound which is attached to physical sound, and not the non-bodily spiritual sound on its own. Though the truths which are derived from the spiritual senses, like the intelligibles "are beyond time and space," he nevertheless argues that completion is predicated on perceiving the physical sensation. Al-Baghdādī is therefore tentative about completely divorcing the spiritual sensation from the bodily sensation.

Landolt finds a similar idea in Najm al-Dīn al-Rāzī's work but concludes that the "positive valuation of the world in al-Rāzī's case appears to involve a certain turning away from the strongly spiritualist trend of Kubrā's and more towards Ibn 'Arabī's view

that vision of God is impossible without vision of the world."[265] From this analysis of the *Tuḥfa,* we see that this assertion cannot be upheld. Al-Rāzī clearly owes his understanding of physical sensation to al-Baghdādī who developed Kubrā's thought further in reference to the physical senses. This is not a divergence from Kubrā and a move towards Ibn 'Arabī as Landolt claims, but is a development of Kubrā's thought through al-Baghdādī. This is an important point since the emphasis on theophany in al-Rāzī's thought has often been portrayed as being due to his diverging from Kubrawī thought and adopting ideas particular to Ibn 'Arabī. Landolt also neglects to highlight that al-Baghdādī's discussions of theophany both with regard to sound and visionary lights clearly predicts al-Simnānī's four-fold theophanic system which is understood in opposition to Ibn 'Arabī's thought.[266] Al-Baghdādī's influence over al-Rāzī and al-Simnānī is clear in this regard.

Furthermore, this conception of the world is important for differentiating between correct practice and behaviour and antinomianism. Al-Baghdādī links his discussion here with the well-known tradition stressing the need for the Sufi to have his "heart with God" while also being able to maintain himself in the physical world and within society. This is an important conception which gains currency the 11th and 12th centuries as Sufism became increasingly institutionalised and antinomian groups became increasingly visible. It is seen for example in the sayings of Abū Sa'īd which al-Baghdādī was certainly influenced by.[267]

This called for a definition of spiritual perfection which envisaged the Sufi's return to societal norms, having been engrossed in asceticism and spiritual experiences in the intermediary stage of the spirit. There had always been a sense that ecstatic states

[265] Landolt, 'Stages of God Cognition', 312.
[266] Landolt, 'Simnānī, 106-107.
[267] Safi, *The Politics,* 144.

brought about by spiritual visions or music could unhinge the mind and lead the Sufi to insanity.[268] Hence, ecstatic states needed to be defined within a framework which could control and temper their expression. In this instance, al-Baghdādī clearly shows that completion is not found in ecstasy but in stability which requires a return to the physical world in order to transcend the station of the spirit.

Our discussion here reveals that this was expressed through a theoretical understanding of the physical senses. By rendering the manifest world a representation of the hidden world, and indeed God himself, al-Baghdādī stresses that it must be sensed in order for the theophany to be understood by the Sufi, imbuing the manifest with renewed importance. In doing so he overcomes the dualistic understanding of the world as divided into hidden and manifest, which is revealed to be an illusion after bridging the distance between the microcosmic hidden and manifest of the human being's composition. When this is achieved, the Sufi hears the speech of God from "the particular letters of the Qur'an" or from any other sound.[269]

By according a greater role for the physical perceptions, al-Baghdādī diminishes the role of ecstatic states, or *wajd,* which are regarded as transient states and a means to completion, but not the ultimate goal of the Sufi during audition. While ecstatic states had always been a feature of the audition ceremony, discussed by earlier writers such as Sarrāj and Sulamī, earlier discussions did not necessarily attempt to arrange such a detailed relationship between physical and spiritual senses and craft a hierarchy of experiences.[270] The discussion of physical senses in al-Baghdādī's text therefore shows that the further development of these ideas which were also intended to address the

[268] Sirriyeh, *Dreams and Visions,* 3-4.
[269] Al-Baghdādī, *Tuḥfat al-barara,* 42.
[270] Avery, *The Psychology*, 26-30.

practical concerns of the day, stratifying the ranks within the Sufi institution and restricting antinomianism while also advancing an account of psychology.

Conclusion

It has been demonstrated here that al-Baghdādī systematises and develops Kubrā's thought towards some very significant conclusions with implications for Sufi thought and practice. Al-Baghdādī furnishes Kubrawī theory with the understanding of the microcosmic significance of the human being. This allows him to discuss the relationship between the soul and the inner sense as well as the outer senses in more depth in comparison to Kubrā. His explanations regarding the sources of dreams and visions which are mapped onto this cosmological framework offers us a more developed oneirology and a better understanding of the theoretical framework of dreams and visions in Kubrawī thought. This exposes the oneiric system which informs not only Kubrā's work, but the works of other Kubrawī authors such as Najm al-Dīn al-Rāzī. This is a significant finding since dream analysis had previously seemed to ascribe meanings to images in a more arbitrary fashion without a coherent system.

This study has demonstrated that al-Baghdādī draws upon a number of concepts found in the works of previous thinkers in order to further develop Kubrawī theory. The microcosmic account of the human proves to be a rather versatile idea as al-Baghdādī draws upon it in almost every psychological discussion in the *Tuḥfa.* But its significance is only fully realised in its dependence upon important concepts which were adopted from al-Ghazālī. This is especially important in the metaphor of the heart as a mirror to the realities which are present within man's composition, as well as the heart's role as a microcosmic throne which explains the soul's command of the body. This allows al-Baghdādī to develop the important symbiosis between perception and the expression of

attributes and testifies to the centrality of al-Ghazālī's thought for the systematisation of Kubrawī psychology.

In al-Baghdādī's psychology it is apparent that all mental and physical perceptions parallel the microcosmic progression of man from the dense, opaque and unclear bodily faculties which obscure the soul, to the more exalted, transparent, purified immaterial soul. This occurs quite literally in some parts of the *Tuḥfa,* in the progression of visionary images, yet at other times there is a more allegorical relationship between the microcosm and visions, in the case of perceptions of different fires, or coloured lights for example. In the case of physical sensation, this was presented as a progression from physical sounds to the spiritual sound which the physical represents as a type of theophany. The correspondence between the microcosmic and macrocosmic realities which are imprinted onto the soul was central in this case, bridging the apparent dualism of al-Baghdādī's cosmology upon perfection.

It has also been shown that al-Baghdādī's theoretical framework heavily influenced al-Rāzī's *Mirṣād.* Hence, al-Bagdhādī's systematisation of Kubrā's ideas spread to the wider Islamic world through the popular works of Najm al-Dīn al-Rāzī in the 13th century. Al-Baghdādī's theoretical framework is also clearly discernable in Isfarā'inī's work where a number of ideas found in the *Tuḥfa* are adhered to including the dualistic conception of man's body and soul, as well as the microcosmic conception of man's being and its relationship to the experience of coloured lights.[271] Later, the Kubrawī thinker al-Simnānī echoes al-Baghdādī's development of Kubrā's thought here as he puts forward a similar cosmological framework to that found in al-Baghdādī's *Tuḥfa* and develops further al-Baghdādī's characterisation of man as a mirror to the divine.[272] Later we will

[271] See Landolt's introduction to *Kāshif al-asrār,* 43.

[272] Elias, *The Throne Carrier,* 74-77.

also demonstrate that the basis of al-Simnānī's prophetology is also traceable to the *Tuḥfa.*

Crucially, we have also highlighted a number of areas where theory and practice intersect and inform one another. These theories of the microcosmic composition of man and its relationship to oneirology as well as sense perception are not simply abstract theoretical concerns. Rather, they inform Sufi practice which translates these theories into a lived experience, shared among the Sufi community. Almost every aspect of the theoretical framework which we have outlined here will be shown to directly inform al-Baghdādī's ideas regarding the structure of the Sufi community, the centralisation of the authority of the shaykh, the response to the tensions surrounding antinomianism, the rules governing affiliations of the Sufi institution with wider society, and the development of increasingly distinct self-conscious Sufi identities. All this will point us to the conclusion that al-Baghdādī's work reveals the emergence of a distinctive proto-Kubrawī community, enlightening us with regard to this gradual transition of Sufism from loosely structured communities to orders.

Chapter 3

Master and Disciple

Having detailed the psychological theory that informs the entirety of the *Tuḥfa,* we have now grasped the framework upon which most of al-Baghdādī's arguments are built. As we have previously discussed, despite al-Baghdādī's extensive passages on psychology, the *Tuḥfa's* main concern is not to outline a psychological theory. Though we have pieced it together here from various chapters of the *Tuḥfa*, none of the ten questions answered by al-Baghdādī is specifically intended to deal with the topic of psychology or epistemology apart from the 5th chapter, distinguishing true visions and dreams from false ones.

However, al-Baghdādī's answers to the ten questions all draw upon his psychological framework to such an extent that the framework itself is revealed in discussions of behaviour and practice. We must then ask ourselves why it is that al-Baghdādī's psychological theory seems inseparable from questions regarding behaviour, practice, antinomianism and politics. In this chapter it will be shown that for al-Baghdādī, theory and practice are interdependent as they inform one another. The adoption of philosophical concepts through al-Ghazālī in order to systematise Kubrawī thought will be shown to be indispensible for al-Baghdādī's attempts to centralise and formalise the relationships within the Sufi community. These concepts will provide a number of discursive tools for the stratification of Sufism.

To account for these developments in thought and practice, we must understand the context of al-Baghdādī's work. This period in the history of Sufism marks the point at which Sufis were consolidating theoretical and practical developments that would

eventually form the basis for later Sufi orders, or *tarīqa* Sufism.[273] Like his contemporary 'Umar al-Suhrawardī, al-Baghdādī's work consolidates trends leading the Sufi community towards its transition into an order.[274] His work highlights some key theoretical developments which were aimed at centralising and formalising the Sufi community, setting the foundations upon which Sufism would later transform into orders.

The germination of many characteristics which we would more commonly associate with the later period of Sufi *tarīqas* are not often traced back to this period of early Kubrawī thought. It will be shown in this chapter that al-Baghdādī develops many characteristics which become much more prominent in the case of later Sufi orders. The claims to exclusivity, the sense of belonging to a particular genealogy, and the competition amongst Sufis in the later period is more pronounced when compared to earlier Sufism.[275] Yet we can witness these developments, albeit more subtly, and perhaps due to their nascence, in al-Baghdādī's work.

Al-Baghdādī attempts to establish a sense of belonging to a specifically Kubrawī Sufi community, and in doing so anticipates the exclusivist claims of later Sufi orders. He achieves this through development of praxis in accordance with his systematised psychological and oneiric theories. This will be seen in his development of *dhikr* rituals which attempt to conjure visions of the shaykh, as well as his rules which govern the behaviour of shaykhs and disciples. He also attempts to centralise the authority of the community in the figure of the shaykh in his development of the terms 'the shaykh of birth-right' (*shaykh al-wilāda*) as opposed to 'the shaykh of training' (*shaykh al-tarbiyya*) distinguishes a shaykh from whom one can claim a spiritual lineage in the former, from

[273] Ohlander, *Sufism,* 15.
[274] Ohlander, *Sufism,* 15.
[275] Deweese, 'Khojagānī', 495.

one who only trains the disciple in the latter. Al-Baghdādī also formalises positions such as companionship (*suḥba*) in order to maintain this centralisation.

To understand why this form of Sufism took shape in in the 12th century, we must look to the history of Sufism up to this point. With the decline of the Abbasids, new state structures based on new political ideas emerged.[276] Roy Mottahedeh has shown that with the collapse of Abbasid authority, the legitimacy of subsequent political rulers stood on shaky grounds. This threw Muslim society "back on its own resources" where it was able to "generate self-renewing patterns of loyalty and of leadership."[277] The increasing stratification of Sufism which takes shape after the collapse of Abbasid power and the emergence of patronage systems between rulers and Sufis in this period can be viewed as an example of society attempting to govern itself. It established relationships of obligations and duties with minimal input from government.[278]

With the ever more fractious and violent nature of the empire of the Khwarazmshahs, the need for such alternative networks of loyalty and leadership to be maintained and strengthened is likely to have increased. Hence, the stratification of Sufi theory and practice and the resultant centralisation of Sufi authority which is evident in al-Baghdādī's work should be seen in this context of the self governance of Muslim society which had to adapt to changing social and political realities.

In this context, Kubrawī Sufism required further formalisation of its affiliations and offices and further centralisation, as increased competition amongst the patrician classes could promote instability within, as well as competition between institutions of learning. This is seen in the examples of Sufis, preachers and legal scholars who were

[276] Hodgson, *The Venture*, 17.
[277] Mottahedeh, *Loyalty and Leadership*, 39.
[278] Mottahedeh, *Loyalty and Leadership*, 190.

executed or exiled in this period. In al-Baghdādī's case, this formalisation and centralisation in the face of political disruption is achieved through the stratification of Sufi psychology, oneirology and visionary theory. Hence specific markers of proto-Kubrawī Sufism emerged in part out of a need to adapt to the realities of the day.

This ability of Sufism to adapt to social and political realities has been noted by a number of scholars. Knysh has argued that Sufism should be viewed as a process of creative reinterpretation of Islam which is determined by a number of social, political and personal factors, and that Sufism did not exist outside its reinterpretation and adaptation to the realities of its day by a Sufi leader and his followers.[279] Anjum however, has noted that limiting Sufism to a reinterpretation which does not exist beyond its manifestation in the realities of the day does not account for why a certain group may identify themselves as Sufis in relation to a shared genealogy or past and requires further explanation. He posits that Sufism should be seen as a discursive tradition which is able to adapt itself by drawing on a shared tradition, vocabulary, narratives and texts.[280]

Anjum's formulation comes closer in describing what we are arguing here in al-Baghdādī's case, however, it does not go quite far enough. For al-Baghdādī, the adaptation of Sufism to socio-political realities through institutionalisation is not a simple case of utilising what was already present in the Sufi tradition. The stratification of Sufi psychology and oneirology in the *Tuḥfa* is dependent on the adoption of important philosophical concepts which enter Sufism through al-Ghazālī and are further developed. The dualism of body and soul, the microcosmic conception of man, as well as collapsing a number of functions of the soul such as perception and command of the body into the metaphor of the heart as a mirror, are central to achieving this

[279] Knysh, 'Sufism as an Explanatory Paradigm', 171.
[280] Anjum, *Mystical authority*, 76.

adaptation in al-Baghdādī's case. The Kubrawīs were not unwittingly drawing on a set of narratives and traditions but were actively developing and shaping these narratives. Hence, through theories which imparted structure onto their communities and wider society, Sufis arrived at new conceptions of identity and group belonging. In our discussion of the institutionalisation of Sufism under al-Baghdādī, the interdependence of practice and theory serves to make Kubrawī psychology and cosmology a lived experience.

Al-Baghdādī does not present the stratification of Sufism as an arbitrary set of rules for the structure of the Sufi community, but as behaviours which emerge organically in consistency with his theoretical framework. While thinking of Sufism as an adaptation to the realities of the day through shared traditions, narratives and texts is a good starting point, we must also acknowledge that the process of adaptation involved the introduction of important doctrines regarding the nature of man which determined the relation of the Sufi to the wider world, through practice and institutional structures. The structure of the Sufi community and the emergence of its collective identity are intertwined with the stratification of Sufi psychological theory.

Al-Baghdādī's work is important here because it reveals the extent to which the formalisation and institutionalisation of Sufism was furthered in this period and the significance of the adoption of philosophical concepts and Ghazālian theories to the stratification of Sufi communities and its impact on medieval Islamic societies. Al-Baghdādī's work is not only important for its systematisation of Kubrawī cosmology, dream theory and psychology. It is also important for attempting to implement these ideas in order to cultivate a sense of belonging to the shaykh, establishing a proper etiquette for each stage of the Sufi path, developing a sense of Sufi elitism, and defining proper behaviour in opposition to antinomianism. All of these developments help

establish the Sufi community's ability to govern itself and survive political and social upheavals.[281]

The Khwarazmshah 'Alā' al-Dīn Muḥammad's empire during al-Baghdādī's time was characterised by instability. The Khawarzmshah "established a reputation for violence and extortion" and his empire was plagued by disaffection among the populace who faced much hardship. Furthermore, the Khwarazmshah's anti-caliphal policy was sure to lessen his legitimacy amongst the Sunni population.[282] The Khwarazmshahs' "orthodox" credentials were further undermined as associations were drawn between them and magical and occult traditions, and by their alliances with former Ismailis. Given their reputation for concealment, the extent to which people believed in the sincerity of these reformed Ismailis' conversion is questionable.[283]

Given this state of affairs, that Sufis would attempt to establish stronger ties which would reassure their communities in the face of hardships seems natural. Hence, the institutionalisation of Sufism is likely to have been catalysed in order to mitigate this breakdown of government and its legitimacy, in addition to the extortion and violence which accompanied this in the Iran and Khwarazm. Examples of religious authorities superseding governmental authority in the period can be seen for instance by the increasing political authority which was deferred to the *'ulamā'* of Bukhara who collected taxes on behalf of the state despite the presence of the secular Karakhānid rulers in the region.[284]

The stratification of Sufism, along with its increasing social responsibilities results in the appearance of more exclusivist tendencies in al-Baghdādī's case. This can also

[281] Mottahedeh, *Loyalty and Leadership*, 190.
[282] Sevim and Bosworth, 'The Seljuqs', 181.
[283] Miller, 'Occult Science', 249; 251.
[284] Sevim and Bosworth, 'The Seljuqs', 181.

partly be understood in the context of the Khwarazmshahs' attempts to rapidly centralise power.[285] Such a policy, accompanied with the infighting amongst the ruling classes is likely to have disrupted patterns of patronage in this period. The hagiographical works which spread and gained popularity in the 12th and 13th centuries stress the need to return to the older "golden age" of patronage under the great Saljuq Vizier Niẓām al-Mulk. The prevalence of episodes involving Nizām al-Mulk who acts as a patron of Abū Sa'īd Ibn Abī al-Khayr in Ibn Munawwar's *Asrār al-tawḥīd* attests to this anxiety over patronage relations.[286] The hagiographies surrounding Abū Sa'īd are also characterised by elitist notions, for example in the attempts to emphasise Abū Sa'īd's authority over al-Qushayrī's. This is important to bear in mind as al-Baghdādī heavily relies on sayings and anecdotes from Abū Sa'īd's life in his discussions of the behaviour of the shaykh and disciple and in the relationship between Sufis and rulers which emphasise an elitist conception of the Sufi shaykh.

Furthermore, evidence of increasing competition among Sufis can be found in the *Tuḥfa* as it argues for an exclusivist conception of the Sufi community against 'Umar al-Suhrawardī's populist approach regarding discipleship and investiture. It seems that the sense of exclusivity which accompanied elitism is indicative of competition between Sufi communities in these uncertain times of political fragmentation, and was a symptom of the need to fortify the Sufi community against competing interests.

Bearing this in mind, here we will establish the structure of the Sufi community according to the *Tuḥfa*. This study then must ascertain how al-Baghdādī embellishes the hierarchy between shaykh and disciple, and show how this is grounded in his psychological framework. This is essential before moving on to consider how al-Baghdādī attempts to resolve some of the tensions between Sufi thought and Islamic

[285] Sevim and Bosworth, 'The Seljuqs', 181.

[286] Safi, *The Politics,* 138-140.

norms and conventions and comparing his community with other emerging Sufi groups in the later chapters of this thesis, since this formalisation and centralisation will itself be shown to function as a restriction of antinomianism. This will answer questions pertaining to the development of Sufism in this period through our analysis of al-Baghdādī's strategies of centralisation and stratification and the pertinence of his oneirology in this regard. All this gives rise to a nascent, specifically Kubrawī form of Sufism.

1. The formalisation of the shaykh-disciple relationship

Before we begin our analysis of the text, it will be necessary to discuss the history of existing scholarship regarding the relationship between shaykh and disciple and al-Baghdādī's position within this context. The formalisation of the relationship between shaykh and disciple determines the heart of the Sufi institution, the means by which it gains legitimacy and authority, and by which it survives and propagates itself. In early Sufism, the relationship between master and disciple was less structured compared to the time when al-Baghdādī was writing. The Sufi author 'Abbād al-Rundī (d. 792/1390) had projected into the history of Sufism, a progression of the shaykh-disciple relationship from an emphasis on "instruction" (*ta'līm)* to one of "training" (*tarbiyya).*[287] The former was conceived of as a shaykh who simply gave lectures to his followers while the latter had a much more comprehensive command of every aspect of the disciple's behaviour.

This characterisation of the role of the shaykh by al-Rundī attempts to explain a shift which was obvious to later medieval Sufis, from a less formalised method of Sufi learning where local communities would form around a particular teacher and would

[287] Karamustafa, *Sufism,* 116.

not survive beyond a few generations, to the establishment of Sufism as an institution which based its legitimacy on a chain of spiritual authority (*silsila*) stretching back to the prophet.[288] This also inevitably paralleled a shift in emphasis on the preferred lifestyle of the Sufi community, for example from travel to a more sedentary life centred in a lodge around the Sufi shaykh who had come to be expected to fulfil important social and political roles.[289]

The relationship between shaykh and disciple is therefore indicative of wider trends in Sufism. A more structured, comprehensive involvement of the shaykh in the disciple's life, along with attachments of belonging to particular shaykhs rather than many at a time indicates a greater degree of formalisation and the increasing importance of the Sufi lodge in society. In this chapter al-Baghdādī's contributions to the growing discussion regarding the proper conduct of the Sufi shaykh and his students in this period will be realised.

The question of the conduct of the shaykh and disciple for al-Baghdādī is also an attempt to address potential theological, legal and spiritual difficulties which were associated with Sufism. One of al-Baghdādī's primary concerns is to detail the nature of completion in order to ensure that adhering to Islamic law and Sufi practices remained necessary for the Sufi at all times against those groups who claimed otherwise.[290]

This is seen for example in his prioritisation of the psycho-spiritual needs of the disciple, and the need to guard him from the potential hazards which face him along the Sufi path. These are presented as the underlying reasons to the formalisation of the relationship between the shaykh and disciple. This need for an interpreter of visions,

[288] Karamustafa, *Sufism,* 116.
[289] Salamah-Qudsi, 'Crossing the Desert', 147.
[290] Al-Baghdādī, *Tuḥfat al-barara,* 34-35.

and a guide who can lead the Sufi past psychological barriers and deceptions is paramount for al-Baghdādī and is one of the main reasons why the shaykh is necessary for the progression of the student. This relationship between the shaykh and disciple also acts as a legitimising factor which qualifies the student to become a shaykh in his own right after having undergone training. In this respect, potential antinomianism, the appearance of unaffiliated Sufis, and the requirement of the disciple to have a shaykh are intimately linked in al-Baghdādī's thought.

Antinomianism is problematic in theory, given the obligation to follow the *sharī'a.* However, it also presents a problem for the centralisation of the shaykh's authority. The existence of people who were recognised as having spiritual insight without belonging to a Sufi institution and without adhering to an established form of mystical praxis could undermine the authority of fledgling Sufi institutions. Many of al-Baghdādī's discussions in the *Tuḥfa* are clearly responses to these potential problems. The 4th chapter of the *Tuḥfa* for example, attempts to explain whether a disciple should obey the shaykh if the latter orders him to break the religious law (*shar'*).[291]

Al-Baghdādī's rules of shaykh and disciple conduct show us that the theoretical and practical are intimately linked in the *Tuḥfa.* Theory clearly informs practice while practice embodies theory. The theoretical becomes a lived experience in the example of oneirology and hierarchical dress codes for example. Al-Baghdādī's work is therefore a crucial source for understanding the development of Sufism at the time. In addition, Najm al-Dīn al-Rāzī's influential *Mirṣād al-'ibād*, which became a popular work throughout the Islamic world is heavily indebted to al-Baghdādī's *Tuḥfa* with respect to its characterisation of the shaykh-disciple relationship. Thus, al-Baghdādī's ideas were disseminated throughout Iraq and Anatolia via his student, and his ideas for the structure of the Sufi institution were made known far beyond Iran and Khwarazm.

[291] Al-Baghdādī, *Tuḥfat al-barara,* 9.

As we have noted, late-medieval Sufis themselves came to realise the change in the relationship between the early Sufi shaykhs and their disciples and how this differed from their own time. Al-Rundī's distinction between the shaykh of training and the shaykh of teaching in the 14th century attempts to understand this as a shift in the methods of learning, yet this does not adequately explain this change. If we wish to truly grasp the reasons behind the formalisation of Sufism, we must first sketch the development of the shaykh-disciple relationship prior to al-Baghdādī's lifetime.

In comparing the transition from early Sufism to the Sufism of al-Baghdādī's time, a change in the nature of the relationship between the shaykh and disciple is clearly discernable. However, modern scholars had previously accepted al-Rundī's explanation that the earlier shaykhs were "teachers" who simply gave lectures to their followers and companions, while later shaykhs were "trainers" who had more comprehensive, authoritarian control over their disciple's behaviour.[292] This distinction does not seem to accurately describe the nature of this transition, and has since been questioned by scholars such as Silvers-Alario, who has pointed out that early Sufis did not distinguish teaching from training.

Silvers-Alario comes to the conclusion that the early Sufi community was a widespread network of shaykhs and their companions (*ṣāḥib*) rather than disciples (*murīd*). These companions would learn from many different shaykhs, often travelling to or with them, and there did not seem to be any claims to uniqueness focused on one particular shaykh and his spiritual lineage.[293] By contrast, later, more formalised forms of Sufism in al-Baghdādī's time are characterised by stronger attachments to shaykhs and a sedentary lifestyle, all of which was associated with the transition of Sufism from a loosely

[292] Karamustafa, *Sufism* 116; Silvers-Alario, 'The Teaching Relationship', 70.
[293] Silvers-Alario, 'The Teaching Relationship', 77-78; 91-92.

structured community to one centred around lodges and institutions. Hence, it is not necessarily the methods of teaching which distinguishes later Sufis from earlier ones.

While there was never a conceptual distinction between instruction and teaching in early Sufism, there is undoubtedly a difference between the fluid relationships of early Sufism and the formalised relationships between shaykhs and disciple which develop throughout the 11th and 12th centuries. It is evident that although the shaykh's role as a teacher and instructor in the habits and behaviours of his followers was always a feature of Sufism, there was an increasing attempt to define the relationship between shaykh and disciple through rules and regulations which appear to become more stringent.

This institutionalisation is developed even further in al-Baghdādī's work and is therefore important for our understanding of the development of Sufism in this period. Al-Baghdādī's contribution is not an arbitrary set of rules. For him, the shaykh-disciple relationship was based on certain theoretical positions which are consistent with his psychological framework. While al-Baghdādī was not the first thinker to develop rules to govern the disciple's and shaykh's conduct, he injects specifically "Kubrawī" ideas into his discussions.

It will be shown here that for al-Baghdādī, a shaykh is someone who has transcended the veils of the ego and spirit so that they actualise the attributes of God. The legitimacy of the shaykh is therefore expressed in the context of the psychological framework as it is formulated within the *Tuḥfa*. While al-Baghdādī does not deny the authenticity of spiritual progress for those who have not gone through proper training, they are nevertheless barred from participating in the institutionalised form of Sufism and propagating a spiritual lineage. Ultimately, Kubrawī psychology becomes that

which justifies the entirety of the shaykh-disciple relationship and the only way for a Sufi to claim shaykh-hood in an authoritative form.

In comparison to the *Tuḥfa,* the discussions of the 10th century thinkers al-Hujwīrī and al-Qushayrī regarding the conduct and proper interaction of shaykhs and disciples are relatively brief. It is not until the 11th century that we see more intricate discussions of the shaykh's relationship with his disciples. The Sufi shaykh Abū Sa'īd Ibn Abī al-Khayr (d. 440/1049) is sometimes credited as the first to attempt the codification of life in a Sufi lodge (*khānqa*).[294] However, many lodges were in operation during Abū Sa'īd's time and he is perhaps reflective of a wider trend in Sufism rather than having begun initiated this himself.[295] Abū Sa'īd's teachings are mainly preserved in the works of his biographers and hagiographers, Ibn al-Munawwar (who wrote and compiled the life and sayings of Abū Sa'īd in his *Asrār al-Tawḥīd)* and Jamāl al-Dīn Faḍl-Allah. He does not seem to have written a treatise on the subject of codified life himself, and therefore the recorded sayings appear somewhat detached from a framework of thought that informs the code of behaviour as it does in al-Baghdādī's thought.

It has been argued that Abū Sa'īd marks a pivotal moment in the development of the Sufi lodge, namely its expansion from a centre for mysticism and asceticism to the service of wider society, adopting some of the functions of the *ribāṭ* (military outpost) and chivalrous groups (*futuwwa*) institutions.[296] This established the place of service to society as a primary function of the Sufi institution at the time, as Abū Sa'īd encouraged Sufi lodges to accept all members of society, waiting upon the poor and needy and social outcasts. This was an extension of the notion of service to society as a form of

[294] Graham, 'Abū Sa'īd', 111; Ohlander, *Sufism,* 31.
[295] Safi, *The Politics,* 98.
[296] Graham, 'Abū Sa'īd', 123.

worship which had gained credence as a form of asceticism among Sufis and chivalrous groups.[297]

During Abū Sa'īd's time, Sufi lodges became centres which cut across class distinctions, receiving the patronage of rulers and influential figures as well. Ibn al-Munawwar's biographical work establishes that the famous Vizier Niẓām al-Mulk was a patron and supporter of Abū Sa'īd for example.[298] Omid Safi shows that many of the narratives in Ibn al-Munawwar's *Asrār* serve to articulate the ideal relationship between Sufis and rulers.[299] The king is expected to pay homage to the shaykh in order to for his rule to be sanctioned by him. To some extent, the relationship between the patron and the shaykh is intended to mirror the relationship between humanity and the divine, God bestows blessings and grace while man's responsibility is to show gratitude and obedience.[300]

This notion is consistent with emerging ideas about the way in which disciples should interact with the shaykh. It will be shown that al-Baghdādī treats the shaykh as an intermediary or substitute for God in respect to the disciple and explicitly refers to him as the inheritor of the prophetic knowledge. Here, the disciple should first attempt to defer his own will in exchange for the shaykh's commands as preparation for annihilating his will completely and substituting it with God's.

Claiming to emulate the teaching methods of the Prophet was not specific to Sufis. Early hadith scholars consciously modelled their methods of teaching after the Prophet and his companions.[301] Yet for al-Baghdādī the Sufi shaykh is not just a representative

[297] Graham, 'Abū Sa'īd', 123,125.
[298] O'kane, *Asrār,* 42.
[299] Safi, *The politics,* 139-140.
[300] Safi, *The politics,* 141.
[301] Makdisi, *Rise of Colleges,* 2.

of God and the Prophet to his students but is also expected to behave as such amongst wider society. At this time, the Sufi shaykh's status as a *walī* (a saint or friend of God) was beginning to be conceived as a representative of the Prophet and therefore of God in wider society as well, and Sufis began to develop more elaborate theories to support this, above simply emulating the prophet's behaviour.

There is precedent for the ideas we find in al-Baghdādī's work in the biographical and hagiographical works dedicated to Abū Sa'īd ibn Abī al-Khayr. Both of Abū Sa'īd's biographers, Ibn al-Munawwar's and Jamāl al-Dīn Faḍlallah were contemporaries of al-Baghdādī. The influence of their work is clearly seen throughout the *Tuḥfa*, as al-Baghdādī frequently quotes from the al-Munawwar's *Asrār* in the *Tuḥfa.* Al-Baghdādī was therefore very much involved in the hagiographical construction of the figure of Abū Sa'īd. By rendering Abū Sa'īd's rules for discipleship and shaykh-hood into Arabic, al-Baghdādī also disseminated the teachings of Abū Sa'īd beyond the Persian speaking world.[302] The construction of Abū Sa'īd is therefore indicative of a wider discussion regarding the institutionalisation of Sufism which was occuring throughout the Islamic world. [303]

In the *Tuḥfa* Abū Sa'īd's name appears in almost every discussion of the rights of shaykhs and disciples and it is evident that al-Baghdādī views Abū Sa'īd as authoritative in this regard. Of course, rules regulating relationships between teachers and students were common across all areas of Islamic learning, there was a prevalent culture of etiquette or *Adāb* throughout the Islamic world at the time, in almost every profession.[304] Yet, al-Baghdādī does not merely repeat Abū Sa'īd's rules and regulations,

[302] Al-Baghdādī, *Tuḥfat al-barara,* 9; Al-Baghdādī, *Tuḥfat al-barara,* 8.
[303] Graham, 'Abū Sa'īd', 124.
[304] Ohlander, *Sufism,* 204.

but invests them with a renewed significance informed by their incorporation into a coherent psychological framework.

Al-Baghdādī was not alone in attempting to root ideal notions of behaviour in a firm theoretical basis. 'Umar al-Suhrawardī was also heavily invested in developing the rules of Sufi behaviour. This is seen in his regarding of the Sufi shaykh as a *muntahī* (someone who has completed the Sufi path) who after having ascended through the ranks of discipleship attains a high degree of freedom and authority.[305] Like al-Baghdādī, 'Umar al-Suhrawardī also constructs the hierarchy of the Sufi institution as a reflection of the levels of psycho-spiritual progression. That al-Baghdādī was interacting with al-Suhrawardī's work is clear as he responds to al-Suhrawardī's *'Awārif* in the 7th chapter of the *Tuḥfa*.[306] The *Tuḥfa* covers many of the same topics which al-Suhrawardī discusses, ranging from interactions with Sultans, to the basis and origins of the *khirqa* (Sufi cloak).[307] Hence, al-Baghdādī should be seen as contributing to a wider transformation in Sufi circles across the medieval Muslim world.

The type of institution 'Umar al-Suhrawardī was cultivating differed markedly from al-Baghdādī's. Al-Suhrawardī characterises some aspects of his *ribāṭ*-based Sufism, as praiseworthy innovations (*istiḥsān*), something al-Baghdādī takes issue with and responds to.[308] Al-Baghdādī's incorporation of the sayings of figures such as Abū Sa'īd and earlier Sufi practitioners into his programme of centralising and structuring the Sufi community by imbuing these ideas with a markedly Kubrawī psychological framework and providing a theoretical basis for Sufi etiquette, is therefore in some sense a response to the ideas espoused by al-Suhrawardī. Hence, it is al-Baghdādī's intention to engage with wider discussions regarding the development of Sufi

[305] Salamah-Qudsi, 'The Everlasting Sufi', 321.
[306] Al-Baghdādī, *Tuḥfat al-barara, 30-34.*
[307] Ohlander, *Sufism* 196, 312-314.
[308] Ohlander, *Sufism* 194.

communities, indicating a vibrant exchange of ideas between Sufis across the Muslim world.

Al-Baghdādī builds upon the ideals represented by Abū Sa'īd in expanding the Sufi's role in serving wider society while attempting to maintain the exclusivity, integrity and intimacy of his Sufi fraternity. This results in what seems like a paradox of both an expansion and a restriction of the Sufi community. We will come to show how this tension is resolved in detail when we come to our comparison of al-Suhrawardī and al-Baghdādī. Before we can move on to such a discussion however we need to understand how al-Baghdādī's thought establishes communal structures and modes of collective belonging.

2. Defining shaykh-hood

In order to fortify itself against outside influences in a period of social disruption and violence, the Sufi institution required a formalisation of its offices. In the earlier period, teaching positions in institutions of learning were largely determined by the collective will of their patricians, despite the development of certifications of learning (*ijāzāt*) since teaching was not really a vocation and there was no employer.[309] Teaching relationships were often fluid and did not necessarily require an institutional connection.

Unlike the Sufi institution, the *madrasa* was not always able to arrive at a defined certification of teaching positions. This was partially responsible for the volatility that we see in 12th and 13th centuries in the case of the *madrasa* in the Levant, where increased competition between patricians meant that a teacher was unlikely to

[309] Bulliet, *The Patricians,* 50.

maintain their position for more than a few years.[310] Al-Baghdādī's definition of what qualifies one to become a shaykh is therefore an important step in fortifying the Sufi institution against such influences. The development of Sufi psychological theory is central to achieving this definition of shaykh-hood which confers and centralises authority in the figure of the shaykh and protects the institution against outside political interests which was an ever more pressing concern at the time.

Before we delve into his definition of what it means to be a shaykh, it is important to note that al-Baghdādī opens the chapter by immediately mentioning the ten qualities that a shaykh should have according to Abū Sa'īd, translating the shaykh's ten points into Arabic with the following:

> 1- That he attains the state of a shaykh (*murād)* so that he may train a disciple (*murīd*).
>
> 2- That he be a wayfarer on the path (*ṭarīq*) so that he is able to guide others [upon it].
>
> 3- That he be [an effective] discipliner and trainer so that he may discipline and train the disciple.
>
> 4- That he be generous and self-sacrificing, not desiring of the world, so that he may affect his disciple [in this way].
>
> 5- That he does not become attached to the disciple's money so that he is not obliged to spend it according to what is correct.
>
> 6- If possible, he should preach with allusions (*ishāra*) rather than explanations (*'ibāra*).
>
> 7- If it is possible for him to discipline the disciple gently, he should not discipline him harshly and angrily.
>
> 8- In whatever he orders the disciple to do, he should consult the disciple before ordering him to do it.
>
> 9- If he orders [the disciple] to abstain from something, [the shaykh] should also abstain from it.

[310] Chamberlain, *Knowledge and Social practice*, 88.

10- If he accepts a seeker of God, he is not to reject him [and turn him back] to anyone else.[311]

Al-Baghdādī then assures the reader, again on Abū Sa'īd's authority, that if the shaykh possesses these qualities and mannerisms, his disciples will become a true wayfarers. This is because, according to al-Baghdādī, every attribute which emerges in the disciple is from the attributes of the shaykh.[312] Therefore in addition to a general etiquette of conduct, al-Baghdādī emphasises the effect of the shaykh on the disciple. This adds a theoretical underpinning to Abū Sa'īd's rules of conduct, which link Abū Sa'īd's sayings to Kubrawī theory. It is crucial to point out that just after this list, al-Baghdādī outlines his psychological theory, which we have already discussed in depth and will not repeat here. That the psychological theory is introduced here is telling since it makes evident that shaykh-hood is defined by the manifestation of the attributes of God as articulated by al-Baghdādī.

The psycho-spiritual justification behind the shaykh-disciple relationship underpins al-Baghdādī's view of Abū Sa'īd's rules. The disciple mirrors the shaykh's characteristics as the Shaykh mirrors the attributes of God. The imagery here references the conception of the heart as a mirror, again showing the relevance of the adoption and development of al-Ghazālī's notion of the soul to institutionalisation of Kubrawī Sufism. Here, the shaykh is rendered an intermediary between the disciple and God. The shaykh pre-empts God's command of the disciple's being by regulating the disicple's behaviour in accordance with his superior knowledge which itself is due to God's command over the shaykh's soul. The surrender of the will to the shaykh as a precursor to the surrender of the will to God is also implied in Kubrā's *Fawā'iḥ* as he states that the initiate should

[311] *Al-Baghdādī, Tuḥfat al-barara,* 5.
[312] *Al-Baghdādī, Tuḥfat al-barara,* 5.

"annihilate" his decisions in that of the shaykh's (*tark al-ikhtiyār wa-ifnā'ahu fī ikhtiyār al-shaykh*).[313]

This theoretical underpinning is important in developing the first two of Abū Sa'īd's listed qualities, namely the need for the shaykh to have gone through a process of discipleship, and that he should belong to a Sufi genealogy in order to qualify as an instructor to others, something Kubrā also stressed.[314] This idea is expanded upon by al-Baghdādī when he begins explaining exactly why it is necessary for a shaykh to have undergone Sufi training. Here it is implicit, that for a shaykh to actualise the attributes of God, he must at some point have been trained by a shaykh. This is because if one is naturally attracted by God they will have had no experience of traversing the microcosm of man through spiritual discipline. They will be transported to the spirit without overcoming the ego, hence they will not have the knowledge to guide a disciple. The disciple actualising the attributes of the shaykh as a precursor for actualising the attributes of God is therefore not only one method of achieving shaykh-hood, it is made a necessary precondition for achieving it. True spiritual completion can never be reached without the guidance of a shaykh.

This asserts the shaykh-disciple bond as an exclusive path to spiritual completion which can only be realised through adherence to the Sufi path (*ṭarīqa*). This is an oft-repeated point by al-Baghdādī, those who are naturally attracted to God (*majdhūb*) so that they may bypass Sufi training, cannot become shaykhs to disciples since they have not encountered the same psychological barriers that an ordinary person has. This is an important development since the term *majdhūb* was used to describe a "passive" Sufi who did not undertake a spiritual path, was naturally attracted to God and seemed to have no goal other than asserting his state of inner contentment, all of which were

[313] Kubrā, *Fawā'iḥ,* 123.

[314] Meier, 'An Exchange of Letters', 266.

features shared by subversive mystical groups.[315] For al-Baghdādī then, the shaykh-disciple bond legitimises and allows for the propagation of Sufism as an institution of spiritual training and delegitimises subversive institutions.

Of course such reasoning is circular since the qualification for becoming a shaykh relies on having been a disciple. However this is justified by asserting a lineage of successive shaykh-disciple relationships which stretch back to the Prophet. This *silsila* to the Prophet establishes a sense of shared authority and genealogy and legitimises the shaykh's authority. Al-Baghdādī is aware of this and immediately after presenting these sayings of Abū Sa'īd states that "Shaykh-hood (*al-shaykhiyya*) is the viceregency (*khilāfa*) of Prophethood, as the Prophet peace be upon him has said: the shaykh in his community is like the Prophet in among his people (*ummatihi).*" He then goes on to state that the learned are the inheritors of the prophets, and the prophets did not leave any inheritance save knowledge.[316] Al-Baghdādī will later develop the idea of the chain of spiritual authority further in his discussion of the Sufi cloak (*khirqa*), in addition to devising a theory of prophetology, all of which will strengthen the force of these arguments. For now we need only point out that the shaykh is able to claim to represent the authority of the Prophet, and that attachment to a *silsila* is necessary in legitimating the bond between shaykhs and disciples.

Quoting Abū Sa'īd's work in this context then, allows al-Baghdādī to marry institutional principles to important theoretical positions. It is no coincidence that al-Baghdādī outlines the progress of psycho-spiritual states in this chapter, mapping the psychological journey from a state furthest removed from God to one whereby man actualises the attributes of God here provides a guide for the entire Sufi path from

[315] Karamustafa, *God's Unruly Friends*, 35.

[316] Al-Baghdādī, *Tuḥfat al-barara,* 5.

initiation to perfection. Here, al-Baghdādī introduces the psycho-spiritual progression we have previously discussed stating:

> Concerning when a wayfarer deserves the position [of a shaykh], and how he may become one of the learned and an inheritor of the Prophet, and when authority (*imāma*) is conferred to him, and how he may act properly with his fellow man, and call (people) to God... Only after knowing the reality of the way and the Sufi path.[317]

Al-Baghdādī then immediately begins to detail his psychology and the microcosmic nature of man, and describes the process by which one may attain the manifestation of God's attributes. Hence, the institutional and societal roles of the shaykh are intertwined with his understanding of Sufi psychology. That this is explicitly stated in the *Tuḥfa* is a clear indication that al-Baghdādī's psychology is not meant to remain abstract but informs the structure of the Sufi order and necessitates the engagement of the shaykh with wider society as well.

After this theoretical interlude, Al-Baghdādī explains that when the wayfarer has sufficiently advanced, his travel, meaning his wayfaring (*sulūk*) and spiritual journeying are exchanged for effortless attraction to God (*jadhba*).[318] The disciple therefore ceases to progress on the Sufi path through his own exertions (*mu'āmala*), and begins to be effortlessly attracted to God. Here, al-Baghdādī tells us that the assumption that the Sufi had any agency to begin with is an illusion. At this point the Sufi begins to understand that his self-awareness in coming closer to God had always really been God coming closer to the Sufi. Al-Baghdādī explains that this realisation takes place after the person's heart has become the throne of God and his innermost heart has become God's seat:

[317] Al-Baghdādī, *Tuḥfat al-barara*, 6.
[318] Al-Baghdādī, *Tuḥfat al-barara*, 7.

> Wayfaring is broken and travelling (*sayr)* is annihilated. Indeed, travelling is exchanged for attraction, and the kernel of attraction is freed from the peel (*qishr)* of travelling so that it is made certain for the [wayfarer] that all his austerities in struggle and beseeching in the beginning were due to the... attractions of God. However, he was not capable of perceiving and comprehending the truth of attraction from behind the peels of acts. So if he has gotten rid of the world of humanity and has realised the truths of manifestation (*tajjalī*) [the attributes of God] and reaching the *ḥaḍra* (presence of God) he becomes certain that there is no God but God. As God has said to his Prophet, "and know that there is no God but God and repent for your sins," meaning repent for self-awareness of the actions of worship. And that is why the Prophet, peace be upon him, has said, "Your actions will not save any of you."[319]

This notion of God's agency and the distinction between attraction and actions is perhaps a development and extrapolation from some important tenets of Ash'arī thought. Traditional Ash'arite doctrine held that every event is directly brought about by God. Al-Baghdādī here applies this notion to man's actions and poses that he should properly conceive of himself as an instrument for God's actions rather than as an autonomous agent.[320] Implicitly adopting this Ash'arī concept, and applying it to human behaviour renders shaykh-hood a matter of realisation. The shaykh understands this while the disciple conceives of himself as the agent who moves closer to God through his own efforts and worship.

In accordance with al-Baghdādī's psychology, the initiate on the path is required to perform acts of worship and austerities in order to progress through the veils of the ego and the spirit. However, once God is in command of the human soul, the actions themselves are revealed to be part of the obstruction along the path due to the assumption of agency which accompanies performing acts of worship. Hence, even

[319] Al-Baghdādī, *Tuḥfat al-barara,* 8.

[320] Ritter, *The Ocean*, 616-617.

though a person may overcome the ego and align his being with the spirit, true completion is not reached until one has understood that the spirit too must be negated for all action to be attributed to God. Towards the end of this discussion, al-Baghdādī uses the phrase "no God but God," *lā ilāha illā Allāh,* to imply that attributing progress to one's own efforts is similar to worshipping a false divinity. This realisation comes to define shaykh-hood and accord the shaykh a freedom and authority in his office above the disciple. For the shaykh, no longer requires acts of worship for progression.

In this discussion, al-Baghdādī also states that not everyone may become a shaykh and teacher to a disciple and a vicegerent of the prophets. Al-Baghdādī begins by explaining that although traversing one's own humanity (*bashariyya*) is necessary for everyone, upon completion all will differ at maturity. He goes on to state that just as God has decreed that at maturity, some people will reproduce and others will remain barren or infertile, so too do those who have attained the attributes of God differ in their ability to create and raise spiritual children.[321] He then relates this to Abū Sa'īd's rules of shaykh-hood:

> Just as the Prophet, peace be upon him, when he attained this state, was instructed by the Real, praise be to him, with proselytising and the message, so too is the *walī* (friend of God), when he attains this state, instructed... with proselytising and the message. And the most important of his qualities are the ten attributes which were mentioned by the shaykh Abū Sa'īd... So the term 'disciple' (*murīd)* is given to him as long as his travels are in the realm of humanity. And if travel in the realm of humanness ends, and providence has attracted him to the enclosures of honour, loving is exchanged for beloved-ness and desiring is exchanged for desired-ness. And if the wayfarer has matured to the end [of wayfaring] (*al-muntahā),* and knows the truths of the hardships, dangers, crossings, [psycho-spiritual] conditions, states, pitfalls, strife, devilish whispers, and perturbing

[321] Al-Baghdādī, *Tuḥfat al-barara,* 8.

> suggestions (*hawājis),* only then is he capable of acting as a guide to others and a cautioner to the disciple in traversing the distances and dangers [of the path].[322]

Here, al-Baghdādī once again links Abū Sa'īd's ten principles, with his systematisation of Kubrawī psychology in order to define what constitutes a legitimate spiritual lineage. Here those completed Sufis who are naturally attracted to God are disqualified from training disciples because they are not acquainted with the psycho-spiritual barriers which ordinary disciples face. Spiritual completion becomes the determining factor in qualifying a shaykh to propagate a lineage only through traversing the entire microcosm starting with the ego and ending with the expression of God's attributes. Hence shaykh-hood is only capable of being reproduced by the journey of another disciple to the station of shaykh-hood through path of microcosmology that al-Baghdādī outlined.

Another important notion which is elaborately developed in the *Tuḥfa* is that the disciple undergoes a spiritual birth upon entering into a training relationship with a shaykh. Prior to the 12th century there does not seem to be any reference to the idea of spiritual birth, yet in the 12th century the idea of rebirth and in the context of the shaykh-disciple relationship becomes ever more prevalent, appearing in both al-Baghdādī and 'Umar al-Suhrawardī's writings.[323] Al-Baghdādī develops the notion of lineage and belonging through this metaphor of birth where the shaykh acts as a husband and the disciple acts as a wife, in order to fertilise an egg (*janīn*) of spiritual development within the disciple. Al-Baghdādī utilises this notion to argue that the disciple ought not to have more than one shaykh at any given time, stating:

[322] Al-Baghdādī, *Tuḥfat al-barara,* 8.

[323] Salamah-Qudsi, 'Institutionalised', 391-392.

> Birth (*wilāda*) and training (*tarbiyya*) are bound in reality to the parents, however the state of childbirth and [the state of] training differ markedly. The bond of birth to the parents cannot be shared between the parents and any other… And in the bond of training, another is able to share with [the parents]… And such is the state of the embryo of servitude in the womb of discipleship. Its emergence and attachment is dependent upon the decree of the Truth praise be to him, [who ascribes to it] to a specific shaykh, in which no one else will share until the death of [that] shaykh. And if the embryo has been born, [meaning] the true seeker, training becomes appropriate, and he is able to suckle from another shaykh like a wet-nurse who stands in the position of a mother.[324]

Al-Baghdādī argues here that a successful "pregnancy" and spiritual awakening requires that the disciple only be attached to one shaykh and goes on to say that if a disciple is trained by another shaykh during this period of pregnancy, there will occur a miscarriage of the spiritual foetus. After the birth however, the disciple is allowed to seek instruction from other shaykhs. These gendered metaphors of the shaykh-disciple relationship reflect a shift to more exclusive claims over the spiritual lineage of the disciple. While in early Sufism a student could have many shaykhs at a time, al-Baghdādī here establishes the exclusive claim to spiritual lineage as the right of the first shaykh. Subsequent shaykhs may teach the disciple but they function as "wet nurses" nurturing the disciple rather than instigating his initial spiritual awakening, and consequently unable to assert a relationship of belonging.

A clear hierarchy develops whereby the shaykh who initially trained the disciple is given the primacy of a parent while any shaykh afterwards is considered a surrogate. This exclusivity predicts the rise of later Sufi orders, al-Baghdādī's attempts to assert a

[324] Al-Baghdādī, *Tuḥfat al-barara,* 18. The use of the term "wet-nurse" may provide a clue as to why Al-Rāzī was given the name *dāya* (meaning wet nurse in Persian). Perhaps he was a "surrogate" or "wet nurse", or shaykh of training to al-Baghdādī's disciples.

difference between lineage and training sheds light on this transitional period in Sufism in the 12th/13th centuries. This also enlightens us regarding the usage of the word (*tarbiyya*) prior to al-Rundī's time. Al-Baghdādī has no notion of a distinction between teaching shaykhs and shaykhs of instruction, rather his concern is in identifying the belonging of the disciple to a particular Sufi shaykh.

Salamah-Qudsi draws attention to this passage of the *Tuḥfa,* pointing out that al-Baghdādī's treatment of the spiritual birth differs markedly from that of 'Umar al-Suhrawardī's, stating that it is much more detailed and elaborate. She also rightly highlights that the emphasis on the notion of spiritual birth barred the disciple from being trained by multiple shaykhs during the period of his spiritual awakening as this would result in a "miscarriage."[325] However, this alone does not encompass the extent of al-Baghdādī's discussion which aims to define a shaykh of belonging and distinguish this role from the shaykh of education. This is a much starker attempt to assert the authority of a particular shaykh's lineage above that of others who the Sufi may study under throughout his career. This notion of birth and belonging is crucial for al-Baghdādī as it is also closely connected to the ritualisation of visions of the shaykh.

Moreover, qualifying to enter into this lineage bears a social responsibility as the *walī* is instructed to proselytise and spread God's message. While the Sufi community internally functions as an intimate and exclusivist organisation, al-Baghdādī maintains a sense of duty towards wider society. Here it may be useful to remind ourselves that al-Baghdādī was given the title of *shaykh al-shuyūkh*, and Lewisohn has asserted that the person who held this office had a number of societal obligations. These were to give counsel to non-initiates, delivery of public homilies, general proselytising and presiding

[325] Salamah-Qudsi, 'Institutionalised', 391.

over *samā'* sessions.[326] Hence the shaykh had a prominent public role among the wider populace.

The disciple on the other hand, lives a secluded life, breaking with his social connections, adopting rules of dress and appearance which mark him out from wider society, observing forty day retreats as well as prolonged periods of silence. The disciple is completely governed by the shaykh and practices austerities and asceticism according to what the shaykh deems appropriate. By contrast the shaykh may engage in a number of activities which may seem more lavish, such as holding banquets and concerts, or conducting business transactions. Such a prominent role is reserved for the shaykh in al-Baghdādī's own writings as he explains that the shaykh should function like a prophet:

> If the servant attains this rank and abode [of actualising the attributes of God], he is between God and his servants, and the abode of the heart is between the manifest and hidden, his outer being (*ẓāhirahu)* is with creation and his inner being (*bāṭinahu)* is with God, "men who are not distracted from remembering God by trade or selling."[327]

The interpretation of the Qur'anic verse [24:37] here is that even though one may engage in worldly affairs, the shaykh's inner state should not be affected by it. The verse is then interpreted not as an order to refrain from worldly affairs, but to be able to engage in them without compromising one's spiritual state. This verse is also emphasised in Abū Sa'īd's sayings with the same aim in mind. Here, al-Baghdādī reinforces ideas found in the sayings of Abū Sa'īd with psychological and hermeneutical evidence, defining the ideal state of the Sufi as one who conducts business with people and lives among them without ever becoming neglectful of God.[328] For al-Baghdādī this

[326] Leonard Lewisohn, 'Iranian Islam', 13.
[327] Al-Baghdādī, *Tuḥfat al-barara,* 8.
[328] Safi, *The politics,* 127.

is a form of asceticism and austerity for the shaykh whereby he must put up with the difficulties he faces in daily life and exhibit patience when amongst the wider populace, referring to the saying of the Prophet "that to mix with people and patiently bear the pain they inflict is better than not to mix with them at all."[329] This reintroduction into, and service of wider society is therefore redefined as an act of asceticism.

3. The role of oneirology in establishing a Sufi community

The development of elaborate Sufi dream theories in the 13th and 14th centuries is not commonly considered in light of its influence on the structure or identity of the Sufi community or as an indicator of wider social changes. Deweese posits that the early Kubrawīs' interest in dream theory meant that figures like Kubrā and al-Baghdādī may have been reclusive in nature and disinterested in social and political involvement, and that this tendency within Kubrawī thought ultimately led to the decline of the Kubrawiyya.[330] Here, we will show that this assertion cannot be maintained. An analysis of the theoretical and practical implications of al-Baghdādī's oneirology will show quite the opposite. A more elaborate science of dreaming is not a purely personal and private venture, but is also important for the development of Sufism as an institution. Hence, dream theory and socio-political concerns should not be seen as mutually exclusive interests.

Dreams in medieval Muslim societies are not purely private experiences. The very act of dreaming and narrating a dream is not a solely mental or personal event. Dreams and visions occur in a cultural context which largely determines what is worth seeing and relating.[331] Moreover, as a means of communication with the unseen, dreams served

[329] Al-Baghdādī, *Tuḥfat al-barara,* 40.
[330] Deweese, 'The Eclipse', 79-80.
[331] Bashir, 'Narrating Sight', 235.

very public roles. By rendering the spiritual sensible, dreams reflected and shaped the medieval Muslim's understandings of the world as well as himself. Dreams and visions could highlight the blessings and charisma of the dreamer for example.[332] They also allowed a person to meet with a deceased figure of authority who could convey a criticism or praise of certain individuals, and in doing so, denounce or legitimate institutions.[333] In addition, dreams and visions were crucial devices in the construction of narratives, featuring prominently in hagiographical, historiographical and biographical works.

The increase in visionary autobiographies written in the 12th and 13th centuries attest to the changing social and institutional realities of Sufism. Earlier Sufi autobiographies such as al-Tirmidhī's and al-Ghazālī's accord a marginal role for the writer's own visionary experiences, while in the autobiographical writings of 12th and 13th century Sufis such as Rūzbihān and Kubrā, visionary experiences are central. As we have discussed in detailing al-Baghdādī's psychology, for Kubrawīs the dream is in a sense a representation of the soul at various stages of perfection and therefore reflects the Sufi path to completion. Salamah-Qudsi's analysis of visionary autobiographies points out that this reflects a turning point in Sufism which saw the widespread adoption of the doctrine of the human soul's divine essence. The adoption of body-soul dualism allowed the assertion of the soul's divine origins and its attachment to the body in al-Baghdādī's thought. This was an important premise for the construction of a coherent oneiric system in the *Tuḥfa* based on microcosmology. Accompanied with the increasing importance of the shaykh and increasing hierarchical nature of the Sufi community, meant that visionary autobiographies functioned as guides for disciples and a means of training.[334] Evidence that visions began to mark out stages of the Sufi path are abundant

[332] Katz, 'Dreams', 183-184.

[333] Green, 'The Religious and Cultural Role', 296.

[334] Salamah-Qudsi, 'The Will to Be Unveiled', 205-207.

in the *Tuḥfa* as both the visions of coloured lights and dream experiences are mapped onto a micro-cosmological understanding of man which represents the extent to which the divine essence of the soul is obscured by spiritual and bodily faculties.

The development of dream theory in al-Baghdādī's work is important for the centralisation of the community and its stratification, as well as crafting a sense of group belonging and identity which binds members to the shaykh. Al-Baghdādī strengthens the relationship between dreams and visions and communal concerns through a ritualisation of the disciple's visions of the shaykh. Furthermore, the concordance between al-Baghdādī's oneirology, psychology and cosmology, renders is an important source of communal identity as it renders the theoretical a lived experience through dream interpretation. The development of visionary-dream theory serves as a means of determining the theoretical and social context of the dreamer. Hence, dream interpretation also reinforces communal identity and belonging by constructing personal narratives for members of the Sufi community, which are nevertheless shared by virtue of being built within a defined theoretical framework.

This elaboration of dreaming as a complex science also compliments the elitist notions which continue to develop regarding the Sufi shaykh as the greatest religious authority in Muslim society. Throughout the *Tuḥfa* al-Baghdādī argues that the Sufis are the true heirs of the prophets and that the authority of the Sufi institution should be placed above all others. As Ohlander states, "dreams were made to serve as a marker of claims to status and authority, in particular in relation to the assertion that among all the self identified *tawā'if* (groups) comprising the Muslim body politic it is the Sufis who fulfil the function of post-prophetic heirship for the *umma* itself."[335] Hence, the development of dream theory into a highly systematised science in al-Baghdādī's work reveals a

[335] Ohlander, 'Behind the Veil', 206-207.

growing self-conception of the Sufi institution as a socially and politically important community.

Here we will also detail the implication of dream theory for the structure of the Sufi network. A more elaborate and detailed dream theory serves a number of purposes. It enables disciples to contact inaccessible living masters who may guide them in times of difficulty, reaffirming the bond between them. At the same time it allows for a wider and more disparate network of disciples. They also serve to connect living Sufis with those who have passed away, allowing the Sufi to claim a lineage to previous masters and legitimate his learning and authority, allowing the institution to continue beyond time and space.

The *Tuḥfa* also draws on the importance of being able to interpret dreams and visions in the relationship between master and disciple. Al-Baghdādī's discussion of dreams serve as a means to assure us of the necessity of the formalised relationship between the shaykh and disciple as the latter is considered ill-equipped to interpret his visionary experiences which may lead him astray. Al-Baghdādī's science of dreaming which we outlined previously, where the incomplete Sufi would receive muddled visions which required interpretation due to the workings of the ego or spirit while the shaykh receives direct messages from God, also easily lends itself to the hierarchical arrangement of the Sufi order.

3.i. Visions and the Sufi hierarchy

We will begin here by analysing how al-Baghdādī discusses dreams and visions in order to justify the formalised relationship of master and disciple. In the above passages one who has not overcome the pitfalls faced by a disciple in his Sufi training cannot qualify as a teacher, and this includes the experience of dreams and visions. The ability to

interpret these experiences becomes synonymous with shaykh-hood. This is seen clearly in al-Baghdādī's psychology where the disciple is discouraged from interpreting his dreams, and must defer all interpretation to his shaykh until he attains completion.

However, al-Baghdādī goes even further than this and on a number of occasions emphasises that the disciple can also receive a psycho-spiritual experience from the shaykh. As we have seen, al-Baghdādī includes the shaykh as a source of thought impressions when detailing the mechanism of dreaming, acting as a "peel" (*qishr*) of divine inspiration (*ilhām*).[336] Hence the shaykh is incorporated into al-Baghdādī's list of thought impressions and appears in the visionary life of his disciples alongside angels, Satan, jinn and God.

The connection of the shaykh to the visionary experiences of his disciples is discussed in the 4th chapter of the *Tuḥfa* when al-Baghdādī turns to explaining why the shaykh is required as a guide to traversing the Sufi path. Here al-Baghdādī builds upon the notion of the disciple mirroring the shaykh's attributes, explaining that the shaykh is like a mirror of God while the disciple is like a mirror of the shaykh. Al-Baghdādī then explains that while this may result in the beginner understanding some realities and truths of his inner being (*bāṭin*) with the "light of the shaykh" and assume that the source of this light was his own rather than reflection of God's light off the mirror of the shaykh's heart. With this hubris, the disciple may leave the shaykh thinking he is capable of journeying to God on his own and only succeeds in returning to his previous state of ignorance.[337]

Ascribing the progress made to one's self rather than to God is one of the main pitfalls encountered by the Sufi. The shaykh therefore acts as a reminder, an intelligible symbol

[336] See Chapter 2.

[337] Al-Baghdādī, *Tuḥfat al-barara,* 11.

and authority to whom all the progress the aspirant makes is ascribed to, predicting the disciple's realisation that this progress should be ascribed to God's attraction rather than himself upon completion. Here, this progress is experienced visually as a shining light emerging from the darkness of the ego. Al-Baghdādī cautions that the experience may be so novel and exciting that it misleads the disciple into ascribing the emergence of the light to his own efforts rather than the shaykh, or mistakenly believe that he has achieved completion. Therefore, the shaykh's role in dream and vision interpretation functions as an antidote to hubris. It also reveals the consistency with which al-Baghdādī applies his notion of completion to the spiritual-mental experiences of the Sufi. The misleading nature of these visionary experiences assert the necessity of the shaykh, this is emphasised in the oneiric scheme of the *Tuḥfa* as completion and the attainment of shaykh-hood is only realised when the colourless light is beheld, indicating the erasure of visions.

Earlier Sufis had stressed the need of a shaykh, explaining that disciples required shaykhs just as the companions required the Prophet.[338] Moreover, it was commonly held that the shaykh would need to act as a guide and interpreter the disciple's visions, however al-Baghdādī clearly embellishes these notions with his own understanding of dreams and visions. There is a close connection here between potential pitfalls and the visionary life of the Sufi. Here the shaykh becomes part of the Sufi's spiritual and mental life and is represented as a light in the disciple's visionary experience.

A few passages later, al-Baghdādī provides us with more information regarding the shaykh's role in guiding the intermediate disciple. Al-Baghdādī discusses two mistakes which a disciple may fall into, building upon some older discussions in Sufism with his markedly Kubrawī theories. First he details the following scenario, likening a disciple's assumption that he has reached completion upon witnessing the beatific visions to

[338] Silvers-Alario, 'The Teaching Relationship', 85.

someone who has observed water erupting from the ground and assumes that there is nothing beyond it, or a digger who assumes that his success in excavating water wells is due to his own efforts, stating:

> This is like the attracted (*majdhūb*) who has received from God light in his heart, so that he is overcome by it and assumes that it is perfection... And he does not know that the blessings [bestowed] upon the servants in the presence of God are infinite, and that the travel within God is never broken, not in the present or in the hereafter. And if the arrogant, attracted one who is pleased with his [supposed] completion, is in the service of a shaykh... The shaykh makes known to him his shortcomings... and he (the disciple) comprehends his attraction with Sufi practice/wayfaring (*sulūk*) until he is free of this complication.[339]

The second potential danger in which the disciple may find himself is in the event of a theophanic vision of God:

> And the second [danger] is that the wayfarer, if he is surprised by the Truth
> (God) in his sleep, or a state of unconsciousness (*ghaybatihi),* and He manifests Himself to his Heart and innermost heart, and he [the disciple] is still under the influence of the imagination, the imaginative faculty will clothe the perceptions of the heart which are received from the state [of Godliness] with a suitable image. And so the wayfarer will assume that the Truth, praise be to him, has an image which is temporally bound (*mutaḥayyiz makānī)*, and so he becomes an apostate. And if he is in the care of a perceptive shaykh, he [the shaykh] will save him from the heresy of *tashbīh*... And will distinguish for him between the workings of the imaginative faculty, the apprehensions of the intellect, the visions of the heart and the perceptions of the spirit.[340]

[339] Al-Baghdādī, *Tuḥfat al-barara,* 13.
[340] Al-Baghdādī, *Tuḥfat al-barara,* 13.

Sarrāj recounts a similar incident which had occurred to one of Tustarī's students for example.[341] However, al-Baghdādī then goes to explain how such experiences, if not interpreted and scrutinised, lead to heretical doctrines of incarnation (*ḥulūl*) and false understandings in moments of ecstasy such as the famous Hallajian phrase "I am the Truth" (*anā al-ḥaqq*). The disciple does not yet comprehend that the human being is a mirror to God and that the reflection of God's essence and attributes in this human mirror is not God himself, yet at the same time is not other than God, utilising al-Ghazālī's analogy of the heart as a mirror.[342]

Al-Baghdādī builds upon these older discussions by incorporating them in the framework of a more developed Sufi theory. In doing so he furnishes the understanding of these experiences with a markedly Kubrawī conception of dreams which explains that the disciple is experiencing a theophany of God, muddled by the projections of the soul onto his mental screen. These phenomena are therefore informed by his understanding of dreams and visions as manifestations in accordance with the state of the seer's soul.[343] Thus, not only is the mistake of identifying an image with God due to the disciple's lack of spiritual progression, but the appearance of God in an image is itself a mark of incompletion.

This more elaborate theory of visions contextualises the visionary and dream experiences of the disciple in a hierarchical order so that an image of God or coloured lights is considered a distortion compared to the experience of the colourless white light of God who cannot be contained in an image. The disciple is told not to attempt to interpret his dreams at all and must defer the interpretation to his shaykh, so that until

[341] Silvers-Alario, 'The Teaching Relationship', 84.
[342] Al-Baghdādī, *Tuḥfat al-barara,* 13.
[343] Izutsu, 'Theophanic Ego', 37.

the final white light is experienced, the hierarchy of shaykh and disciple is maintained even in the psycho-spiritual experiences of the disciple.

The intertwining of the personal visionary experiences of the Sufis and the formalisation of the communal and hierarchical bonds between shaykh and disciple are even more striking in al-Baghdādī's discussion of clothing. That the Sufis should wear the colours they experience in their visions and according to their spiritual stations, details a hierarchy of colours from blue for the initiate to white for the shaykh.[344] Here the systematised theory of dreams and visions which al-Baghdādī outlines is not relegated to pure theorisation but becomes a lived experience, mirrored in the material culture of the Sufi community as it establishes a clear communal hierarchy.

3.ii. Dreams, visions and communal identity

In addition to his reliance on dream theory to formalise and detail hierarchies within the Sufi community, al-Baghdādī also takes recourse to dreams and visions in order to provide the Sufi community with tools to survive and adapt to the political and social changes and disruptions of his day. Perhaps one of the most striking examples of this is the presence of the shaykh in the spiritual, visionary and imaginative world of his disciple.

In an anecdote about Abū Sa'īd's friend, the shaykh Abū al-Ḥasan al-Kharaqānī (d. 452/1033), al-Baghdādī describes that a group of Sufis who are about to set out on a journey ask al-Kharaqānī for a *dhikr* formula which would protect them. The shaykh tells them to repeat his name in an event of danger. Some of them mock this advice,

[344] Al-Baghdādī also explains that white fineries may only be worn by the shaykh due to the annihilation of their human qualities (*fanā' al-bashariyya*) and the perfection of their worship, see al-Baghdādī, *Tuḥfat al-barara,* 3-5.

preferring to invoke the name of God, while others adhere to it, and in the end those who mocked the advice perish in their journey while the remainder arrive safely. The shaykh then explains that although the name of God is certainly greater, those who perished had performed *dhikr* of a name they did not understand.[345]

Al-Baghdādī then turns to discussing the practice of communing with the shaykh through the remembrance ritual (*dhikr*). In the 5th chapter of the *Tuḥfa,* which focuses on detailing the theories and methods which inform the practice of seclusion (*khalwa*), al-Baghdādī repeats Junayd al-Baghdādī's rules of seclusion, elaborating heavily on each. When discussing the 7th rule of "binding the heart of the disciple to the shaykh," al-Baghdādī explains that the shaykh may communicate to the disciple through dreams and visions, explaining:

> For the shaykh in his community is like the Prophet among his people, and just as it is impossible for devil to appear in the image of the Prophet peace be upon him, on the authority of what was said by the Prophet peace be upon him: "Whoever has seen me in their sleep has [truly] seen me, so the devil cannot impersonate (*yatamaththal*) me." So for that reason, it is impossible for him to appear in the image of the shaykh. And the shaykh does not occupy space (*ghayr mutaḥḥayyiz*)... All places are equal to him, and so for any situation in which the disciple finds himself, the shaykh's spirituality does not abandon him... And if the disciple performs remembrance (*yatadhakkar*) of the shaykh in his heart, the shaykh comes closer and is bound to his heart and he [the disciple] benefits from him.[346]

As we have detailed in our discussion of al-Baghdādī's psychology, the notion that the soul does not occupy space refers to the dualism of body and soul and the independence

[345] Al-Baghdādī, *Tuḥfat al-barara,* 21.
[346] Al-Baghdādī, *Tuḥfat al-barara,* 18.

of the soul from the body. This enters Sufi thought through al-Ghazālī's adoption of Avicennan ideas regarding the relationship of the soul and the body. Here is a clear example of how the incorporation of philosophical notions into Sufism through al-Ghazālī offered later Sufis with the conceptual tools to stratify not only Sufi thought but also their institutions. Since the soul can subsist without the body and is not bound to it, it makes sense that a disciple and a shaykh could commune spiritually.

This also draws on the oneirology and visionary theory which we have discussed in the previous chapter. We have seen that the remembrance (*dhikr*) ritual was intended to bar thought impressions from entering the mind apart from the intended object of vision. Hence, the remembrance, through the negation of thoughts and sense perception, with God as the intended object of vision could produce theophanic images or coloured lights via the imagination or the spiritual sensation. Here al-Baghdādī reveals that the remembrance ritual can be directed towards the soul of the shaykh as well.

The reference to the prophet, in the above passage is also important since it guarantees that the image of the shaykh is true just as the prophet's image cannot be a deception. This reveals an important practical consequence for al-Baghdādī's prophetology which we will sketch in the coming chapter which likens the shaykh to the prophet. Hence, the development of oneirology, prophetology, as well as the adoption of Avicennan body-soul dualism combine here to produce a ritual practice which reinforces communal identity and further centralises authority in the shaykh.

Al-Baghdādī details three instances where the disciple may benefit from calling on the spirituality of the shaykh: In the instance of a vision or experience he cannot comprehend, in the event of being frightened by a satanic experience, and lastly when the disciple is preparing to witness the lights of the hidden world (*anwār al-ghayb*) which threaten to overwhelm him (this refers to the coloured lights detailed in Kubrā's

Fawā'iḥ which have discussed previously). In the first two instances remembrance of the shaykh helps disperse the threatening visions, while in the latter example it fortifies the disciple to allow him to receive the visions of the lights of beauty and majesty which threaten to overwhelm him.[347]

Although instances of perceiving one's shaykh in a dream or vision were reported in earlier Sufi works, al-Baghdādī's here shows that the experience had become ritualised and became part of the Sufi's repertoire of practices. A vision of the shaykh is induced here rather than appearing at random. The bond between shaykh and disciple is not confined to the world of the *shahāda* here, and the training of the disicple allows a psycho-spiritual connection to exist between both parties regardless of their location in the "world of bodies." This spiritual connection seems to have become even more important amongst later Sufis, however al-Baghdādī presents us with an early source which details a ritualised method for this. This ritual was in fact put into practice in the 14th century. Al-Simnānī who was barred from meeting his shaykh Isfarā'inī in Baghdad by the Ilkhanid rulers of his time resorted to communicating with him spiritually. Al-Simnānī himself stipulated that one's guide ought to be living even if he is not in the same location as the student, indicating that even an inaccessible guide could be considered sufficient for one to qualify as a disciple and legitimise an institutional bond.[348]

This psychic connection between masters and disciples becomes an important feature of Naqshabandī Sufism by the 16th century. In these later periods, some Sufi communities would practice visualising and imagining the shaykh in a practice known as *tawajjuh,* and Bashir has stated that this went hand in hand with the *dhikr* formula of *lā ilāha illā Allah*.[349] Later Kubrawī sources also treat the shaykh as a protective spirit

[347] Al-Baghdādī, *Tuḥfat al-barara,* 17-19.
[348] Elias, *The Throne Carrier,* 122-123.
[349] Bashir, 'Narrating Sight', 243.

which can be called upon to aid the disciple in his time of need.[350] Al-Baghdādī's text shows that this idea had been germinating much earlier in the 12th and 13th centuries.

The possibility of psycho-spiritual guidance without necessarily being near one's shaykh serves a number of practical purposes. Al-Baghdādī mentions that it encourages the disciple to remain in seclusion so that he will not be required to break it to ask the shaykh to interpret his visions and experiences for him. This was certainly an important reason for al-Simnānī's view of the spiritual communication with the shaykh.[351] The ritualisation of this spiritual relationship between the shaykh and disciple may also serve further purposes. It allowed al-Simnānī and Isfarā'inī to form a formalised teaching bond without a prolonged interaction between teacher and student. Hence it allowed the relationship to continue despite the political ruler's insistence that al-Simnānī be barred from reaching his shaykh in Baghdad.

It also accommodates the structure of a widespread Sufi community and mitigates the potential setbacks of emphasising a much more sedentary lifestyle. An increasing emphasis on "stability" and a sedentary life among Sufis in the 11th and 12th centuries contributed to a negative view of travel (*siyāḥa/safar)* which had been seen previously as an honourable and virtuous lifestyle. In addition, these more established Sufi communities began to develop rules that increasingly restricted and regulated travel.[352] Al-Baghdādī, in his Persian treatise *Risāla fī al-safar* argues that the Prophetic instruction to travel and improve one's health must refer to a spiritual journey, since physical travelling only deteriorates one's health if they are not accustomed to the climate to which they travel to.[353]

Such a change in attitude towards travel indicates the increased association of subversive religious groups with aimless wandering, while Sufis were becoming more

[350] Deweese, 'Sayyid 'Alī Hamadānī', 148.
[351] Elias, *The Throne Carrier,* 122
[352] Salamah-Qudsi, 'Crossing the Desert', 145-146.
[353] Al-Baghdādī, *Risāla fī al-safar,* 310.

sedentary. The increased regulations surrounding travel for Sufi members, for example requiring the permission of the shaykh to do so, also reasserts the centralisation of the Sufi community. There were of course legitimate reasons to travel and Sufis did find themselves having to travel to proselytise, to learn from a shaykh, to perform pilgrimage, and to escape violence. In these situations the elaboration of oneirology and visionary theory, as well as the ritualisation of visionary experiences reduces the tension between centralisation and the spread of the Sufi community, allowing relationships to continue beyond time and space.

This could also add a sense of continuity and stability to a community experiencing dislocation caused by violence and political disputes which were rife during al-Baghdādī and Kubrā's time. We know of a number of Sufis who fled Iran and Khwarazm for Anatolia in the 12th and 13 centuries, the most prominent cases being that of Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī's father, Bahā' al-Dīn Walad, as well as Najm al-Dīn al-Rāzī. These cases have led some scholars to posit that the Khwarazmshah's court was particularly hostile to Sufis.[354] It was probably not a specifically anti-Sufi agenda, but competing political interests that caused these emigrations, and undoubtedly affected those within the Sufi community.

This ritualisation of visions of the shaykh then maintained a sense of belonging to a specific community. This is made clear in the *Tuḥfa* as al-Baghdādī seamlessly transitions from discussing the *dhikr* of the shaykh to explaining the difference between a shaykh to whom one belongs to and a shaykh of training, *tarbiya.* Here al-Baghdādī associates the ritualised vision of the shaykh with the shaykh of belonging. He explains that the *dhikr* of the shaykh helps the disciple in the three instances we have outlined above before moving on to detail the exclusive right of a disciple's shaykh of birthing:

[354] Algar, *The Path,* 12.

> And in these two instances, if [the disciple] remembers the shaykh and beseeches him like a child beseeches his parents when seeing something which he is afraid of, or speaks [the shaykh's] name, then he perceives the dispersion of the image of Satan upon remembering [the shaykh's] name, or the removal of fear and horror from his heart and the negation of [the satanic thought impressions]... And it is not possible for someone to say: "We have seen that the shaykhs benefitted from more than one shaykh, such as Abī 'Uthmān al-Ḥīrī, for he gripped the rope of discipleship of Yaḥyā ibn Mu'ādh al-Rāzī, and after that he aspired to the companionship of al-Shāh al-Kirmānī and he followed his steps until he was accepted, and then according to what has been said, [he then followed] al-Shāh al-Nīshābūrī. And he [then] saw Abū Ḥafṣ al-Ḥaddād and [was taken] into his mesh. And he deliberated until Abū Ḥafṣ was established instead of al-Shāh... And you [al-Baghdādī] have been excessively stern in asserting that discipleship is attached to only one shaykh." To this we say: Birth and training are attributed to the parents...[355]

The text switches rapidly form detailing the benefits of performing the *dhikr* of the shaykh, to the issue of belonging to one shaykh while being taught by multiple shaykhs. Here al-Baghdādī attempts to differentiate between a shaykh of "belonging" by equating him with a biological parent and a shaykh of "training" or "nurturing" as a wetnurse. The two discussions do not seem connected unless we assume that al-Baghdādī implicitly accords a greater psycho-spiritual role for the shaykh of belonging, which seems to be the case since he posits the question of why it is not possible to benefit from many shaykhs in the context of the ritualised visionary remembrance. This would also explain why a discussion of birthright and training are found in a chapter on remembrance and seclusion, which would otherwise seem out of place. The ritual of the *dhikr* of the shaykh therefore is revealed to have a further symbolic meaning, asserting a belonging to a specific shaykh by according him a prominent role in the psycho-spiritual experiences of the disciple.

[355] Al-Baghdādī, *Tuḥfat al-barara,* 19; For the entire passage see page 185.

The use of the term *tarbiya,* nurturing or training in opposition to *wilāda,* or birthing also highlights that the term *shaykh al-tarbiya* might have had a number of connotations in this period. Since, as we have previously discussed, there has been some attention given to the evolution of this term and whether it signified a change in the nature of Sufism, we may highlight here that the term appears in a different context to that of a purely methodological concern. For al-Baghdādī, *tarbiya* is not a term concerned with the shaykh's approach to training, it is concerned with the belonging of the disciple. Hence, the training relationship is made subordinate to the "birthing" relationship in order to centralise the authority of the Sufi community.

Moreover it seems that al-Baghdādī's attempts to centralise the community were met with resistance. Hence, he predicts an objection citing the example of 'Uthmān al-Ḥīrī. This indicates that the notion of belonging to one shaykh above all others may have been a departure from the looser networks of belonging which had characterised Sufi communities up to this point. Here, the psycho-spiritual function of the shaykh and the practice of the *dhikr* of the shaykh augment the special relationship of the shaykh of birth, allowing the disciple to continually believe in his presence and guidance even if he must enter into the service of another shaykh.

This concept not only centralises the authority of the shaykh of birth but also forms a spiritual and visionary connection between him and his disciples, this links the shaykh to every individual's psycho-spiritual experience within his community. This establishes an identity of belonging to the shaykh which is able to survive in a number of contexts where shaykhs and disciples were unable to reassert their bonds in person. This was predicated on the adoption of specific conceptions of the soul, the stratification of oneirology, and the development of prophetology which lay the foundation for the ritualisation of visionary experiences. Ultimately then, it becomes impossible to disentangle the development of the oneiric theory that we find in Kubrā

and al-Baghdādī's work from the structure of the Sufi community, its identity, and its responses to social and political challenges.

3.iii. Dream Interpretation and the construction of narratives

In addition to the existence of the shaykh's soul beyond time and space, the formalisation of dream interpretation is another important "ritual" which we have seen al-Baghdādī emphasise. The psychological theory al-Baghdādī detailed accorded dreams and visions a diagnostic value. Yet, they could also present information that is not merely subjective, conveying the truths of both manifest and hidden existents.[356] However the disciple is not allowed to interpret these experiences himself, or reach conclusions on his own. The interpretation is the remit of the shaykh, and the experiences of the disciple are constructed into a narrative through the shaykh.

As we have highlighted, dreams were important devices in biographical works that helped construct narratives. Hence, dream interpretation helped construct personal narratives in accordance with the Kubrawī theoretical framework, connecting individual experiences to shared, communal experiences. This meant that dream interpretation became an ever more important device, linking individual dream experiences to a collective sense of identity by providing the dreamer with interpretations that reinforced the theoretical underpinnings and institutional structures of the Kubrawī community.

We attain a glimpse of how this functioned practically in the letters exchanged between al-Baghdādī and Sharaf al-Dīn al-Balkhī, where al-Baghdādī interprets the latter's

[356] Al-Baghdādī explains: For the niche of the heart when opened to the hidden world, perceives the hidden things and is divinely inspired by the truths of knowledge and the subtleties of wisdom. Al-Baghdādī, *Tuḥfat al-barara,* 12.

dreams. In one of these dreams Balkhī perceives a "demon" shaykh who informs him that the *dhikr* formula of *lā illāhā illa Allāh* is inappropriate and that one should only repeat *Allāh.* In his interpretation of the dream, al-Baghdādī treats the demon shaykh's argument seriously. Here al-Baghdādī admits that the former *dhikr* is not yet a reality for the disciple until he has attained completion yet, still he argues that initiates should repeat the formula "no God but God" as they are still in need of negating the ego, which is the false divinity. This disagreement over the correct formula for *dhikr* is relevant to al-Baghdādī's distinction between a *majdhūb* and a disciple who must adhere to certain behaviours to overcome the initial stages of the path. The formula of "no god but God" indicates the need to traverse the ego and spirit which al-Baghdādī is keen to maintain as a necessity for achieving completion.

Al-Baghdādī then tells al-Balkhī to avoid taking instruction from jinn, as they will not be familiar with the veils that humans face due to the bodily existence of human beings.[357] The demon shaykh is given the same status as a *majdhūb* or non-affiliated, passive Sufi here, described in the same manner as one who has not been trained by a Sufi shaykh and did not have to overcome the psycho-spiritual barriers of his ego through Sufi practice, and is therefore not fit to instruct and teach disciples. In this way, al-Baghdādī reasserts the arguments he makes in the *Tuḥfa* in his interpretations of al-Balkhī's dreams. The process of dream interpretation is therefore an event which may be used to reassert the Kubrawī theoretical framework, definitions of shaykh-hood, as well as notions of hierarchy and belonging.[358]

In another more fantastical dream, al-Balkhī tells al-Baghdādī that he had witnessed a desert, empty apart from a single well. At first animals emerge from the well and they

[357] Meier, 'An Exchange of Letters', 252; 266.

[358] This same objection is dealt with in the same manner in Isfarā'inī's *Kāshif al-asrār,* which discusses the relationship between Shaykh and disciple. Here, Isfarā'inī reproduces the same argument in response to the objection to the formula of *lā ilāha illā Allāh,* see Isfarā'inī, *Kāshif,* 42.

begin transforming back and forth between animals and humans. Then a giant serpent (or dragon) emerges from the well and swallows all the animals but after a while regurgitates them back out again. Al-Baghdādī interprets the symbols of this dream according to his psychological framework. We are told that the desert is existence while the well is the connection to the unseen. The animals represent the attributes of the ego, while the serpent represents al-Balkhī's spiritual progress. The serpent attempts to subdue the attributes of the ego but is tired and must release them, indicating a spiritual fatigue.[359] In this case al-Baghdādī maps the symbols of the dream onto his psychological and microcosmological framework which we have previously outlined, again reinforcing the theoretical underpinnings of his Sufi community through dream interpretation.

All this also reinforces the authority of the shaykh. Al-Baghdādī links the disciples attempt to understand his own dreams to the potential for dreams and visions to mislead the Sufi. It is the institution of the shaykh-disciple bond which regulates the potential heresy of believing that one has seen the image of God for example. Moreover, it is the interpretation in the context of Kubrawī psychology, which seeks to understand these images in reference to the state of the Sufi's soul which tempers misleading visionary experiences. The potential dangers of dreaming therefore act as an argument for the necessity of the disciple to have a shaykh. The potential to be misled by these experiences is nullified in the event of dream interpretation. But the shaykh does not only guard against these dangers, he is heavily involved in shaping the narrative of the dream and diagnosing the psycho-spiritual condition of the individual. Hence dream interpretation grants the shaykh the authority to shape these narratives.

Throughout this discussion we see that there is overwhelming evidence for the link between the development of a more structured dream theory and the centralisation

[359] Al-Baghdādī, *Risālat shaykh Sharaf al-Dīn,* 275.

and formalisation of the relationships within the Sufi community. We have seen that the ritualisation of dreams and visions, along with the practice of interpretation reasserts notions of belonging and connection among members of the Sufi community, as well as reinforcing the psychological and cosmological theories upon which these relationships are based. All this points to the centrality of oneirology in the emergence of a proto-Kubrawī communal identity.

4. The role of the disciple

Some studies describe the relationship between the shaykh and disciple as one of complete domination and subordination. At a glance it seems that al-Baghdādī places the disciple in a state of complete submission in the structure of this community, however a closer examination presents a more complex picture which suggests that disciples were given authority in some cases, and could even run their own lodges while still maintaining a relationship of discipleship towards their shaykhs. However, in order to grasp the structure of multiple teachers with one central shaykh of birth-right, al-Baghdādī's notion of discipleship and its various stages must be detailed. Al-Baghdādī defines the various stages of discipleship Just as he did with shaykh-hood, with reference to his psychological system.

From what we have discussed so far, it is evident that alongside the authority and freedom which was granted to the shaykh, his jurisdiction over the disciple was so great that it required complete surrender of the disciple's will to the will of the shaykh. Al-Baghdādī detailed an extremely intimate relationship between the two where "the shaykh's authority encompasses all the affairs of the disciple, and all he experiences in private and in public."[360] Al-Baghdādī often discusses the relationship between shaykh

[360] Al-Baghdādī, *Tuḥfat al-barara,* 8.

and disciple in gendered language, as one between a husband and wife, two lovers, or a hen and her eggs.

In *Gender and Spiritual Self-Fashioning,* Margaret Malamud explores medieval Muslim conceptions of gender and marriage through the imagery employed by Sufis in describing the shaykh-disciple relationship. Malamud argues that this is in accordance with the idea of the shaykh as an intermediary between God and the disciple and indicates that the shaykh-disciple bond was conceived of as a parallel to the ideal human relationship with God, where the human is in a state of complete passivity and receptivity towards God. Here it is argued that in likening the shaykh-disciple relationship to that of man (shaykh) and wife (disciple), medieval Sufis expressed the ideal role of a woman in a marriage as a passive and submissive partner compared to the active role of the husband, signifying hierarchical relationships of power and subordination.[361] She also highlights a number of passages from the work of al-Baghdādī's disciple, al-Rāzī's *Mirṣād al-'ibād,* describing the shaykh as a mother who suckles her child or a hen which cares for her eggs.[362] In fact many of these images of the shaykh have their origins in the *Tuḥfa* which predates the *Mirṣād* and which al-Rāzī is clearly quoting here.[363]

Al-Baghdādī shaykh and disciple as husband and wife, however in these passages his main aim is to illustrate, as we have previously discussed, that some marriages result in offspring (a shaykh capable of carrying on a lineage) while others are infertile.[364] The focus al-Baghdādī places in these metaphors is not on the submissive role of the disciple, but on the procreative potential of the shaykh-disciple bond which calls into

[361] Malamud, *Gender,* 100-101.

[362] Malamud, *Gender,* 96-97.

[363] *Tuḥfat al-barara,* 10; 19. Al-Baghdādī refers to the disciple as an egg and the shaykh as a hen in Al-Baghdādī.

[364] Al-Baghdādī, *Tuḥfat al-barara,* 8.

question the shaykh's suitability as much as it does the disciple's. His point in this instance is that some Sufis do not qualify to be followed by disciples and cannot produce a lineage, and that those shaykhs who are unqualified but gain a following, will never be able to "impregnate" their disciples. Al-Baghdādī's main concern is spiritual lineage and the survival of the chain of authority, as well as the centralisation of the Sufi community around a shaykh of belonging. This also hints at al-Baghdādī's exclusivist approach to accepting disciples, choosing only those who can attain shaykh-hood.

For al-Baghdādī, the relationship is not one of complete domination and subordination as the disciple comes to acquire some scope for authority with respect to those disciples who are less advanced than him. This is an important development since it allows the spread of the community without compromising its centralised and exclusivist character. The very existence of shaykh-hood is dependent on the presence of disciples, and the more disciples a shaykh had, the more prestige he would command.[365] This offers a means to that prestige without seeming to relax the rules of discipleship.

The shaykh is tasked with carefully considering the individual within his authority, taking into account his individual experiences and not simply treating each disciple in the same manner except in a general sense. There is also an attempt to reign in the jurisdiction of the shaykh and bar the abuse of his position. The situation then was in some ways reciprocal, and the disciple did acquire the possibility of some authority and influence within the institution prior to becoming a shaykh in his own right.

At the beginning of the 4th chapter of the *Tuḥfa* al-Baghdādī turns to discussing the nature of discipleship (*irāda*) more explicitly, explaining why a disciple requires a shaykh, what is incumbent upon the disciple, and whether or not he is required to obey

[365] Farah, 'Rules governing', 86.

the shaykh's instructions even if they violate the outer aspect (*ẓāhir*) of the *sharīʿa* and common sense. Al-Baghdādī again immediately translates from Abū Sa'īd here, listing the ten qualities which a disciple needs in order to undertake the Sufi path:

1- That he be clever and understanding, in order to understanding the *ishārāt* of the shaykh.
2- That he be obedient to [the shaykh] so that he may perform the duties ordered by the shaykh.
3- That he be perceptive in his hearing to understand the speech of the shaykh.
4- That he be enlightened in his heart to perceive the greatness of the shaykh.
5- That he be trusting in the words (of the shaykh) so that he trust what he (the shaykh) says about his psychological dispositions.
6- That he has trust in the authority [of the shaykh] so that he is sincere in his responsibilities.
7- That he be generous and self-sacrificing so that it is possible for him to abandon what he possesses.
8- That he is able to keep secrets, so that he becomes a confidante of the shaykh.
9- That he be enthusiastic and loving of advice, to accept the advice of the shaykh.
10- That he be a wayfarer so that he may sacrifice, with his spirit, along the Sufi path.[366]

Al-Baghdādī goes on to state that only those who have these ten characteristics may become students to a shaykh. He then moves on to say that some people are not qualified to undertake the Sufi path, explaining that, although all humans had the same primordial origins, they differ in the extent to which their souls can be purified.[367] He then describes how some people who simultaneously desire the present and the hereafter do not qualify as disciples.[368]

[366] Al-Baghdādī, *Tuḥfat al-barara,* 9.
[367] See chapter 2.
[368] Al-Baghdādī, *Tuḥfat al-barara,* 9.

So in addition to these ten requirements al-Baghdādī demands a further assessment of the disciple's spirituality. It seems that for al-Baghdādī, the general populace is not fit for this task as he often describes them as lacking in spirituality.[369] Discipleship for al-Baghdādī is an exclusive privilege and unlike the Sufism of his contemporary 'Umar al-Suhrawardī who relaxed affiliations to the Sufi institution, al-Baghdādī maintains an exclusivity when it comes to the heart of the Sufi community as the shaykh in theory should not accept a disciple who falls short of these conditions.

The intimate relationship between shaykh and disciple in the *Tuḥfa* seems to contrast with the more formal arrangement crafted by 'Umar al-Suhrawardī. Many of al-Suhrawardī's rules are in accord with the ten qualities which Abū Sa'īd and al-Baghdādī list.[370] However there seems to be a more intimate tone in the shaykh's interaction with his disciples in al-Baghdādī's *Tuḥfa* when compared to al-Suhrawardī's *'Awārif.* This is seen more explicitly as al-Baghdādī states:

> For every individual from among the people there is, according to their particularities, a particular way (*ṭarīq khāṣṣ)...* For every disciple has experiences which concern [only] him, as well as experiences which he shares with all other disciples. So the shaykh has a particular path, and the disciples, also have according to their particularities, paths and specific experiences, which are not within the path of the shaykh.[371]

Furthermore, although the disciple is required to submit to the will of the shaykh and obey his command, he could still exercise some authority within the structure of the Sufi community according to al-Baghdādī. Even while the student is still a disciple, al-Baghdādī allows him to train students who are less advanced. Thus the shaykh may train an intermediate while the intermediate trains a beginner as al-Baghdādī explains:

---

[369] Al-Baghdādī, *Tuḥfat al-barara,* 32.
[370] Erik Ohlander, *Sufism,* 202-203.
[371] Al-Baghdādī, *Tuḥfat al-barara,* 8.

> We have clarified previously the station which when reached by the wayfarer, makes it possible for him to guide and train disciples, and from whom shaykh-hood is acceptable... And it is the traversing of the Attributes of humanness and reaching the presence of God. And we have clarified that although this is the end of travelling, it is the beginning of the emergence of attraction. And the travel of attraction within God is endless. And the station in which the wayfarer is qualified to become a shaykh is shared between prophets and shaykhs... And the difference between the station of the prophets in their levels, and the station of the shaykhs in their grades appears after establishment in the shared station which is the point of arrival and maturity [shedding the attributes of humanness and reaching the state of Godliness]. And so the wayfarer is complete with respect to those below him regarding discipleship (*irāda),* lacking [in completion] with respect to those above him regarding shaykh-hood. And so he benefits from his shaykh and benefits the disciple.[372]

Here, al-Baghdādī details a system whereby a Sufi, though not yet qualified to depart from the training of his own shaykh, may train disciples who are not as advanced as him. Here, there appears to be scope for disciples to acquire some authority before completing their training within the Sufi institution and becoming shaykhs to initiates. Hence like other Sufi communities, al-Baghdādī manages to incorporate intermediate teaching positions while detailing a more intimate and hierarchical arrangement.[373]

This is dependent on al-Baghdādī's definition of attraction. Since the attributes of God are infinite, it remains impossible to attain a finite state of perfection. This highlights the extent to which the development of theory is relevant for the development of the structure of the Sufi community. Al-Baghdādī introduces new hierarchies into the structure of the Sufi community, allowing disciples to simultaneously occupy the

[372] Al-Baghdādī, *Tuḥfat al-barara,* 15.
[373] Farah, 'Rules Governing', 92.

position of a student and an instructor. This allows for the potential of the Sufi institution to expand while maintaining a centralised notion of authority.

This may also help explain historical reality of the loosely structured Kubrawī community at a time where Kubrā and al-Baghdādī operated within the same network, yet seemingly ran their own separate lodges. We may remind ourselves here that ʻAlī Lālā seems to have received training from both Kubrā and al-Baghdādī. And as we have shown earlier, al-Baghdādī's role in Lālā's Sufi training does seem more prominent than Kubrā's, while al-Rāzī who was also trained by both shaykhs, mentions al-Baghdādī frequently does not mention Kubrā at all in his work. Al-Baghdādī's assertion therefore could be an attempt to make sense of this reality and establish a centralised conception of the Sufi community with scope to incorporate independent Sufi shaykhs functioning at the same time within it. This attempt to centralise the authority of the community in one shaykh is stressed as al-Baghdādī discusses the point at which the disciple becomes a companion to his shaykh:

> And it is a wonder that sometimes the power of the disciple becomes greater than the power of the shaykh, so that his saintliness is greater than that of his shaykh's. Yet even so, in reality he is not free from the requirement of adhering to his shaykh... And the etiquettes of companionship (*ṣuḥba*) are in accordance with adhering to the rights of the shaykh in his presence and in his absence, and there is no need to explain this, for the true [companion] does not need to be taught these etiquettes.[374]

Here, once a disciple attains an equal or greater spiritual rank in comparison to his shaykh, he is termed a companion (*ṣāḥib*) rather than a *murīd.* The relationship between a companion and a shaykh remains a formalised one, with the companion still behaving as a disciple. This term, which in early Sufism was used loosely in order to describe a

[374] Al-Baghdādī, *Tuḥfat al-barara,* 15.

shaykh's followers, is employed here to refer more specifically to his spiritual equals. This formalises what has historically been a more informal relationship. Thus, the centralised authoritative structure of the community is maintained despite the existence of multiple qualified shaykhs within one community. This formalisation hinges on al-Baghdādī's definition of *intihā',* which we may translate as completion, though bearing in mind that the term is better understood as attaining or reaching the end of Sufi training. Al-Baghdādī tells us that *intihā'* is in fact the beginning of manifesting God's attributes. This process of manifesting attributes is endless, just as the names of God are infinite. The following chapter will provide a fuller account of this concept along with the concept of attraction.

Conclusion

Throughout this chapter we have seen that the theoretical and practical are inseparable in al-Baghdādī's attempts to centralise and formalise the structures of the Sufi community. We have seen that his psychological theory was employed to redefine and develop a number of positions within the Sufi community and define the qualifications for positions of shaykh-hood and discipleship. The terms birth (*wilāda*), training (*tarbiy*ya*)*, and companionship (*ṣuḥba*) were all employed to further centralise the authority of the shaykh. This is not only important for our understanding of al-Baghdādī's thought, but for the development of these key terms throughout the history of Sufism.

We have seen that psychological theory was essential in the development of theories of dreams and visions which not only established belonging and a sense of cohesion, but also informed the material culture of his Sufi community, in the cases of dress and visionary experiences. In addition, we have shown that al-Baghdādī also attempts to

reshape the Sufi community and centralise it through visionary remembrance rituals. All this highlights the ways in which the development of psychological theory was relevant to the social and political changes of the day, and the importance of al-Baghdādī's work for understanding the changes undergoing within the Sufism of this period.

If we are to understand the transition of Kubrawī Sufism in this period better, al-Baghdādī's text is invaluable. It also provides us with a comparative example to the work of 'Umar al-Suhrawardī, who in contrast to the early Kubrawīs, has received far more scholarly attention in this regard. Here we have presented a number of arguments which raise some important questions regarding the relationship between early Kubrawīs and 'Umar al-Suhrawardī with regard to exclusivity and populism. We will attempt to answer these questions through a comparative study of their respective approaches to investiture practices later in this thesis. Through this comparison we will show the versatility of al-Baghdādī's approach, as the paradigm of theory and practice that he crafts serves to navigate questions of antinomianism as well as questions surrounding affiliation and competition with other Sufi communities.

Chapter 4

Subversion of Islamic law and social norms

By presenting al-Baghdādī's discussions of dispensations from the law, we can come to a better understanding of early Kubrawī thought and answer some important questions regarding the development of Sufism in relation to the rise of subversive mystical groups in this period. This chapter will show that al-Baghdādī relies on Kubrawī psychology and its formalisation into institutional structures in order to distinguish between normative and heterodox behaviour. These discussions in the *Tuḥfa* have important implications for the Sufi community's place within society.

Much of the *Tuḥfa* attempts to address tensions between Sufism and Islamic law and practice. The extent to which the Sufi is bound to abide by the *sharīʿa* is dealt with directly in the 3rd, 4th, 8th and 9th chapters of the *Tuḥfa.* In addition, the 5th chapter on seclusion discusses whether or not it is permissible for a disciple to study religious sciences and scripture during seclusion. Clearly this issue is of prime importance for al-Baghdādī as it is one of the *Tuḥfa's* main concerns. This calls for further clarification since al-Baghdādī does not seem all together consistent in his rules regarding dispensation from the law at first glance. His insistence on complete adherence to the law at times sists uncomfortably with his tolerance of dispensation from it in the case of the perfected Sufi shaykh.

For example, in the 10th chapter of the *Tuḥfa,* when discussing whether it is permissible for Sufis to keep company with rulers, al-Baghdādī expresses ideas which if taken at face value seem to allow for the Sufi to break the religious law. This is justified with reference to the psychological theory we have outlined. In completion, the Sufi is able to perceive realities through his spiritual senses and capacity for visions, allowing him

to make judgements which are impossible for others to assess. Al-Baghdādī explains this in the following passage:

> And the elders and seniors of the shaykhs are those who stand steadfastly with God... And if they take anything, it is not for anyone to object to their taking [of it]. Because the insight of others is in the perceptible form of things, and their insight is from the realities of things.[375]

At the end of the chapter al-Baghdādī seems to suggest that the notions of legal permissibility (*ḥalāl*) and impermissibility (*ḥarām*) are relative, depending on a person's spiritual rank, stating:

> The purpose of the initiate is to preserve the outer aspect of the law... Until God grants him, with perfection, the station of the matured men and so permissibility for him is that which he does with the will of God, and what is forbidden to him is that which he does with [the command of his] ego, heart or spirit.[376]

If taken in isolation such statements seem to provide scope for transgressing the law. A theoretical tension seems to exist here between divine inspiration and the obligation to adhere to the law. However, it would be a mistake to interpret al-Baghdādī as allowing even a perfected Sufi to explicitly break the law. A closer reading reveals that al-Baghdādī relies on his psychological theory to argue against the possibility of transgressing the religious law. However, al-Baghdādī's main use of psychology in these discussions is not to systematically rule out dispensation from the law, rather he limits the potential to subvert the law through the formalisation of Sufi hierarchies. This indicates a more nuanced attitude towards antinomian behaviour than we might

[375] Al-Baghdādī, *Tuḥfat al-barara,* 41.
[376] Al-Baghdādī, *Tuḥfat al-barara,* 42.

otherwise expect, disturbing notions of a clear opposition between subversive and "normative" Sufism.

This reading of the *Tuḥfa* has important implications for our understanding of medieval Muslim society. Dispensation is for Sufis to cling to in order to justify the elitism of the Sufi institution and to argue for its precedence over legal schools and perhaps even rival Sufi institutions. In the case of Iran and Khwarazm, al-Baghdādī's assertion of the elitist notion of the Sufi shaykh's rights to dispense with the law coincides with the collapse of political authority, increasing violence and dislocation, and the competing patterns of patronage which ensued. The effect of this on the Sufi community necessitated the restriction and delegitimisation of subversive expressions unless they came from the shaykh. In this context, the rise of antinomian groups is best understood as a reaction to the increasing institutionalisation, elitism and political nature of Sufism which limited antinomian expressions within the Sufi community.

1. Defining Antinomianism

To understand how al-Baghdādī's psychological theory is employed to restrict antinomianism requires an attempt to define the parameters of normative Islamic behaviour and deviance in this period. Discussing the relationship between Sufism and antinomianism in the context of medieval Islam requires us to recognise a multiplicity in the ways in which Sufi or "mystical" piety was expressed. From the earliest days of those mystical groups and figures who came to be known as Sufis, conforming to Islamic and social norms could be held alongside practices such as seclusion, celibacy, and various forms of asceticism which seemed strange to wider society.[377] Antinomianism therefore had a number of manifestations, from holding and expressing

[377] Karamustafa, 'Antinomian Sufis', 101.

seemingly heretical beliefs, to strange or disrespectful behaviours, and even performatively breaking the *sharīʿa.* There was no standardised criteria for identifying an antinomian. Furthermore, subversive behaviour was not always synonymous with heresy.

Our attempts to understand the relationship between Sufism and antinomianism have also been complicated by scholarship in the recent past. Medieval Sufis have been categorised as either adhering to social and religious conventions or subverting them in modern scholarship. This is perhaps partly due to the problematic distinction between the so-called "drunk" and "sober" schools of Sufism which have informed earlier scholarly works. In reality, the terms *sukr* (drunkenness) and *ṣaḥw* (sobriety) when they appear in the works of al-Hujwīrī, al-Qushayrī and others before them, were technical terms, often an interdependent pair, intended to describe certain spiritual conditions and did not define distinct Sufi groups.[378]

The question of social and religious conservativism and subversion is more complex as the very same Sufi thinker may hold antinomian beliefs alongside more conventional ones, or engage in strange practices in some instances, while adhering to conventional behaviour in others. The *Tuḥfa* is particularly enlightening in this regard for its attempts to respond and restrict religiously subversive behaviour while maintaining the theoretical possibility, and permissibility of the shaykh to dispense with the religious law.

The first documented, and unsuccessful charge against the Sufis for heretical beliefs and behaviours emerges in Baghdad in 264/877. This was an incident where the "traditionalist" preacher Ghulām Khalīl accused about seventy Sufis, along with Abū al-

[378] Mojaddedi, 'Getting Drunk', 13.

Ḥusayn al-Nūrī (d. 295/907), of *zandaqa* or heresy.[379] It is not clear what the central charges were exactly, however the questions which were said to have been put to Nūrī cover a range of practices, from attitudes to prayer and ritual purity, to the claim that the Sufis had said they no longer feared God but loved him.[380]

The fluidity of Sufi belief and practice at this time means that it is not possible to identify one clear defining belief or set of behaviours and practices which distinguished between antinomian and "orthodox" Sufis. The 9th and early 10th centuries certainly were turbulent times for Sufis. Ḥallāj, who was executed in 309/922 represented for generations after him, the most provocative expression of Sufi doctrines by blurring the distinction between creator and created with his statement "I am the truth." Subsequent Sufi authors however did not emphasise speculation on the nature of God and instead focused their attention on Sufism as a pietist movement and on detailing the inward experiences of the Sufi. The famous Sufi Junayd al-Baghdādī, a contemporary of al-Ḥallāj, introduced a distinct terminology for Sufism which attempted to express Sufi thought in a less provocative manner.[381]

This development of a distinctive lexicon marks an early attempt at institutionalisation in response to accusations which associate Sufism with antinomianism. Junayd, by defining and crafting comprehensive ways of speaking about mystical experiences, begins to mark out a "scholarly" Sufism from a fluid landscape of mystical beliefs, practices and expressions. And, as Melchert has argued, these developments were reactions to the increasing repression of the time.[382] Hence tendencies towards institutionalisation, even in the early days of Sufism, can be understood as reactions to antinomianism and political repression.

---

[379] Karamustafa, *Sufism,* 11.

[380] Karamustafa, 'Antinomian Sufis', 102; Karamustafa, *Sufism,* 12; Melchert, 'Sufism', 239.

[381] Melchert, 'Sufism', 240.

[382] Melchert, 'Sufism', 239.

Despite these developments, the subversive potential of Sufism remained. Sufism by al-Baghdādī's time had also absorbed facets of other groups which could potentially be socially subversive or strange. For example the formation of a community around a lodge was something adapted from the Karrāmiyya, an earlier ascetic religious movement.[383] By appropriating and formalising some of the beliefs and practices of other socially subversive mystical groups, Sufism managed to subdue modes of religious behaviour which were viewed as strange or problematic.

However Sufis themselves were not completely free from accusations of heresy and while they may have subdued socially deviant movements by supplanting them, they nevertheless achieved that by adopting some of their practices. In addition to the creation of Sufi lodges, other aspects of loosely structured mystical movements were incorporated into Sufism resulting in a range of ascetic practices, dress codes and hairstyles which marked Sufis from non-Sufis. Furthermore the practice of *samāʿ* and the association of Sufism with musical concerts was always a source of tension between its proponents and detractors.

One of the ideas most commonly associated with antinomianism originated with the Malāmatiyya or "the people of blame." Beginning in Nishapur in the 9th century, this loosely structured group of devotees saw expressions of outward piety as a trap for the ego and attempted to outwardly blend into wider society. For them concealing their piety was of prime importance, they maintained conformity with society around them while their "hearts" were with God. Yet they also considered it better to incur blame

[383] Ahmet Karamustafa, *God's Unruly Friends,* 31.

(*malām*) than to express outward forms of piety.[384] This movement no longer existed in al-Baghdādī's time, however Sufism absorbed some aspects of its thought.[385]

The early 13th century saw the emergence of antinomian dervish groups such as the Qalandariyya under the leadership of Jamāl al-Dīn Sāvī (d. 630/1232-33) beginning in Egypt but quickly spreading throughout the Muslim world. The Qalandarīs were antinomian in almost every way, rejecting family life, vocations, shaving all their hair, wearing minimal clothing with equally minimal respect for the religious law.[386] Qalandarīs initially did not rely on the notion of blame in order to justify their behaviour, instead it seems that they based their ambivalence to social norms and Islamic law on their spiritual contentment.[387] Blame became an important concept for the Qalandariyya in later periods. There is a sense that for later Qalandariīs, it was not enough to blend in with wider society but to actively transgress social and religious norms in order to incur blame and abase their egos.[388] The notion of blame was therefore not antinomian in itself but could be used in order to justify antinomian behaviour. Yet this was shared between lodge based Sufis as well as emerging antinomian groups in the 13th century.

Even those Sufis who are considered "normative" maintained that intentionally incurring the blame of society could be a virtuous thing. For example al-Hujwirī endorses blame which is intentionally incurred in order to break one's attachment to society or to reduce the fame they may have attracted for their piety. However, al-Hujwīrī rules out the permissibility of breaking the law in doing so.[389] There was

[384] Dols, *Majnūn,* 379-382.
[385] Melchert, 'Sufism', 240.
[386] Karamustafa, *God's Unruly Friends*, 2-3.
[387] Karamustafa, *God's Unruly Friends*, 35.
[388] De Bruijin, 'The Qalandariyya', 75.
[389] Karamustafa, 'Antinomian Sufis', 106.

therefore, in some cases, a sympathetic attitude to the Malāmatī movement from very early on, so long as the law was adhered to.[390]

By the time al-Baghdādī was writing, controversies over Sufi notions of unity between man and God which came to the fore with figures such as al-Ḥallāj seem to have subsided. Between al-Ḥallāj's and al-Baghdādī time, Sufi writers such as Sarrāj, Sulāmī, al-Hujwīrī, al-Qushayrī and al-Ghazālī had consistently clarified aspects of Sufi thought, argued for the agreement between it and Islamic scripture, and diminished the idea of a literal union between man and God. Al-Ghazālī in particular had mounted an extensive defence of Sufism in his *Iḥyā'.* Al-Baghdādī himself does not formulate his exposition of Sufi thought and practice in the *Tuḥfa* in a defensive manner, and does not attempt to justify Sufism's accordance with Islamic doctrines and scripture. On occasions when the question of legal permissibility arises, al-Baghdādī is content to refer the reader to the *Iḥyā',* for example in his argument for the permissibility of *samā'*.[391] It is clear, that for him Sufism's accordance with Islamic scripture requires no justification. Al-Baghdādī is instead more concerned with clarifying correct modes of behaviours in relation to Sufi theory.

2. Antinomianism in the *Tuḥfa*

Al-Baghdādī's treatment of antinomianism differs in its scope from these previous Sufi discussions of antinomianism. Both al-Ghazālī and al-Hujwīrī for example denounced those who flout the religious law. These earlier writers tend to consider the idea of breaking the law in light of the notion of *malāmma* (blame) and maintain that it may be permissible to perform a blameworthy act that does not break the law.[392] This was

[390] Dols, *Majnūn,* 381.

[391] Al-Baghdādī, *Tuḥfat al-barara,* 45.

[392] Karamustafa, 'Antinomian Sufis', 102; 107.

clearly related to the performative context of incurring blame, which depended on outside observers.

Instead al-Baghdādī frames antinomianism as a question tied to psycho-spiritual completion (*intihā'*). This emphasis on completion signals the emergence of mystics whose framework for subversion seemed not to be primarly attached to blame, but to spiritual contentment which meant that observing the religious law was no longer required for them. The problem for al-Baghdādī regards the extent to which one is justified in breaking with the law in accordance with spiritual completion. He is not concerned with the heresy of incarnation or transgressions of those motivated by blame, offering no mention of blame and only a very brief paragraph regarding incarnation.

This shift in framing the discussions of subversion is an important indicator of societal change. It is directly relevant to the increasing authority of the Sufi shaykh above that of legalists and other religious authorities. In this context, subversive behaviour had to be delegitimised while institutional Sufi authority had to be maintained. Moreover, the notion of being able to dispense with Sufi practices also bears implications for the acceptance of new affiliates and the incorporation of secular rulers into the Sufi community. Relaxation of rules regarding dispensation allowed 'Umar al-Suhrawardī to formally invest rulers with the Sufi cloak for example.[393] Hence the notion of dispensation was closely associated to the question of whether or not to accept lay affiliates into the Sufi community. Discussions of dispensation are therefore not limited to antinomianism in every instance. This results in a tension within the text of the *Tuḥfa* between permissible and impermissible exemptions from the law which does not seem to be systematically resolved.

[393] Salamah-Qudsi, 'The Idea of Tashabbuh', 185.

Al-Baghdādī himself was accused of defying the *sharī'a* and social custom in his relationship with a princess that he secretly married. In addition the imagery associated with the Qalandarī in Persian poetry was ascribed to al-Baghdādī in al-'Irāqī's poem which mentions the youthful al-Baghdādī playing chess with Kubrā.[394] Hence al-Baghdādī was associated with antinomianism at certain points in his life and after his death. For him, questions regarding antinomianism were relevant to his position as the *shaykh al-shuyūkh* as he was accused of misconduct by rival parties with rival political interests. These questions then bear very real consequences for the circumstances of al-Baghdādī's life. Allowing the shaykh some freedom with regard to dispensing with the law and social norms was most probably a pertinent issue for him.

Al-Baghdādī died just before the Qalandarīs and the Ḥaydarīs emerged as distinct movements. He does not mention any such groups, and nor do his contemporaries denounce them as heretics or charlatans. There is no indication here that al-Baghdādī's discussions of antinomianism and dispensations are directed at a defined group of mystics. In fact, the formalisation of Sufism which was taking place in the 12th century seems to rise in tandem with antinomian brotherhoods. Even the Qalandarīs who attracted harsh rebukes from Sufis and other thinkers in the later 13th century, were not criticised so heavily by Sufis in the late 12th and early 13th century. Earlier Sufi criticism was of a subtler nature, for example 'Umar al-Suhrawardī, describes them as sincere believers, governed by the tranquillity of their hearts "to the point of destroying social customs."[395] They are not necessarily considered charlatans, and their spiritual accomplishments, though incomplete and misguided, are not considered disingenuous.

[394] Karamustafa, *Antinomian Sufis*, 109. Chess along with backgammon, gambling and sexual promiscuity, amongst other motifs was part of a set of symbols associated with subversive mystics and Qalandarīs in poetry.

[395] Salamah-Qudsi, 'Crossing the Desert', 143.

A similar attitude towards subversive mysticism exists in al-Baghdādī's thought, where it is delegitimised and discouraged but tolerated to some extent. Hence, we should not assume that the wider Muslim community was hostile to such groups from their inception. Al-Baghdādī's student, Najm al-Dīn al-Rāzī, who fled to Anatolia just before the Mongol invasions of Iran, testifies to the prevalence of "charlatans" and "tricksters" posing as learned men and gaining esteem.[396] But this seems to refer to the spread of people posing as Sufis while not possessing the correct qualifications. His concerns regarding tricksters then is directed at misplaced patronage rather than rejectors of social custom.

Al-Rāzī also mentions the "qalandar" in a poem in his *Mirṣād* with positive connotations.[397] Moreover, al-Baghdādī lists in his work some practices to which initiates should adhere but which were common to Qalandarīs as well, albeit in a more extreme manner. For example he tells us that his disciples should shave their head, something which the Qalandarīs took to the extreme by also shaving their facial hair and eyebrows in order to distinguish themselves from society.[398] Hence, the premises on which the Qalandarīs based many of their practices could sometimes be shared by institutionalised, lodge based Sufis. Clearly then, when al-Baghdādī does refer to Sufis and mystics who subvert the law, he does not have the idea of a qalandar in mind.

Al-Baghdādī's assertion of dispensations for the Sufi shaykh then is not primarily concerned with the rise of particular antinomian groups. Rather, the increased political and societal importance of Sufism in a fractious political environment led to the need for a justification of the shaykh's right to dispensations. This in turn led al-Baghdādī to curtail and undermine more radical expressions of spirituality, as well as denying them

[396] See Algar's introduction to the *Mirṣād*, 12.
[397] Al-Rāzī, *Mirṣād,* 100.
[398] Karamustafa, *God's Unruly Friends,* 39.

institutional legitimacy.[399] Hence, the antinomianism which spread in distinct forms from the 13th century onwards can be seen as a response to the institutionalisation of Sufism advanced by thinkers like al-Baghdādī and 'Umar al-Suhrawardī.

In this study therefore, it will be necessary to understand the term antinomianism not as a reference to a defined group of people such as the Qalandarīs. Rather, what is meant by the term 'antinomianism' in this study is a trend of potentially subversive behaviours and beliefs which was gaining currency at the time. Al-Baghdādī's own definition of the term can be deduced from the *Tuḥfa* itself. The heading of chapter 8 of the *Tuḥfa* is explicitly formulated in order to address the issue of whether or not the Sufi is required to maintain legal obligations upon completion. The heading of chapter 9 also mentions the notion of completion but specifies whether the Sufi should obey a vision or experience which orders him to transgress the law. In chapter 4, al-Baghdādī answers whether or not the disciple is obliged to follow the commands of the shaykh in the event that they seem to contradict the law prima facie.[400]

Al-Baghdādī's definition of antinomianism can be formulated in the following manner: adherence to the notion that the Sufi is no longer required to observe legal and religious obligations, either due to his state of completion in which performative acts of worship are made irrelevant for him, or due to spiritual insight and mystical experiences which command him to forego such obligations. This formulation is indicative of an emerging phenomenon of mystics who would forego observance of religious obligations and may not have been affiliated to a Sufi institution with an established spiritual chain of transmission. There is no indication that al-Baghdādī identifies any particular group here rather than what seems to have been a growing

[399] Karamustafa, 'Antinomian Sufis', 114.

[400] See chapter 1 section 5, 53-55.

trend. Indeed, there is no evidence that these groups existed as well defined categories in this period.

His response to this issue which emerges in a number of separate discussions within the *Tuḥfa* is also telling. Central to all these responses however is an attempt to redefine the notion of completion as an infinite journey of travelling *within* God as opposed to the finite journey of travelling *to* him so that the Sufi may never cease observing religious obligations and the requirements of the Sufi community. This may also account for the curious absence of the term *baqā',* with its connotations of abiding and the cessation of movement, in the *Tuḥfa's* descriptions of completion. Hence, his response is meant to define the notion of completion (*intihā'*) in order to circumvent an interpretation of the term which would allow for dispensation from religious obligations and Sufi practice. Yet defining the term *intihā'* has important implications for the structure of the Sufi institution as well as antinomianism.

Hence, al-Baghdādī's response to these questions is multifaceted and intends to address more than what he perceives as an emerging trend of antinomianism. With these restrictions, al-Baghdādī intends for the authority of the Sufi shaykh to exceed that of the jurists when it comes to legal matters. He is keen to allow some degree of freedom with regard to the law in the case of the shaykh. Yet, this operates within the framework of existing legal opinions and is therefore relatively restricted. He also attempts to restrict the access of lay affiliates to official affiliation to the Sufi community by restricting dispensations from the law and Sufi customs for initiates. Hence, defining completion and restricting dispensations point to the wider concerns of the Sufi institution as well. The significance of emerging antinomian groups should therefore not be over-emphasised since these discussions act as avenues to address a number of issues which were pertinent to the Sufi community.

3. Prophetology

One way in which al-Baghdādī deals with the notion of antinomianism is through detailing a prophetology. This is evident in his lengthy passage on the actualisation of the attributes of God which in addition to defining completion, constructs a prophetology that corresponds to the ranks of the soul and positions the Prophet Muhammad as the ideal "completed" person whose example must be followed in order to achieve perfection. The development of prophetology here is significant for understanding the development of Sufism in the 12th century and onwards. Prophetology became incredibly prominent in al-Simnānī's articulation of Kubrawī psychology for example, positing that the individual contains an inner prophet which corresponds to his spiritual station.[401]

These ideas spread and grew in complexity over the centuries, influencing thinkers during the Timurid period like Jāmī.[402] It has been claimed that the first examples of this type of prophetology are found in 'Aṭṭār's writings,[403] however al-Baghdādī provides an extremely early and detailed theory of prophetology based on his psychology. While it is difficult to determine when prophetology began to become a feature of Sufi thought, the similarity between his and 'Aṭṭār's prophetology strengthens the case of a connection between the two figures, and al-Baghdādī should be seen as the most likely origin of 'Aṭṭār's ideas.

Given the growing significance of prophetology in Sufism in this period and afterwards, it is important to highlight here the extent to which it is indebted to al-Baghdādī's articulation. Its emergence in the context of al-Baghdādī's discussion aimed at

[401] Elias, *Throne Carrier*, 84-85.
[402] Ul-Hudā, *Striving*, 92.
[403] Ul-Hudā, *Striving*, 92.

restricting antinomianism, and his grounding it in premises particular to Kubrawī psychology reveal that the impetus behind this way of speaking about the Prophet serves both theoretical and practical purposes. This relationship between the theory and practice can be explored in an analysis of the 9th chapter of the *Tuḥfa.* Here, al-Baghdādī answers the question of whether one may break the religious law or is exempted from ritual obligation upon completion of the Sufi path.

In his answer al-Baghdādī introduces a more detailed discussion of attributes, and although the purpose of this passage is to lead into an argument for the need to follow the Prophet's example in order to manifest the attributes of God, al-Baghdādī briefly digresses and provides justification for manifesting attributes which may seem blameworthy but are in fact praiseworthy. He begins here by expounding upon the notion of man being composed of all the realities of the created worlds:

> And it is necessary for you to know, along with what you have learnt, that God has created the human and placed in him all the specificities of the two worlds, the hidden and manifest. And upon reflection, [man's composition is divided] into four aspects. And of them, [there are] two, one which he shares with the lower bodies [earthly] and one which he shares with the higher [celestial bodies]. And [from these four sides there are another] two aspects, one which he shares with the hidden things, and one which he shares with the created things in the manifest world.[404]

Al-Baghdādī starts here by elaborating upon the microcosmic notion we have already presented in detailing his psychology. Here al-Baghdādī divides creation into four categories, here he adds lower bodies such as those on earth, and celestial bodies such as the planets to the two categories we have previously discussed which are the hidden

[404] Al-Baghdādī, *Tuḥfat al-barara,* 38.

and manifest. He then moves on to explain how each of these aspects relates to the manifestation of attributes:

> And for every aspect of these aspects, there are specificities and attributes. And the aspect which he shares with the lower bodies is the ego in the convention of the learned (*muḥaqaqī)* Sufis, for they have said, it is the nurturer of the blameworthy attributes. And it is not meant here that they are blameworthy in an absolute sense, but they are blameworthy additions [to the ego.] For the praiseworthy, good attributes which are from the specificities of [this aspect of the ego], are of the blameworthy attributes if they are considered additions to the attributes of the spirit. For the truth of the blameworthy attributes are the dark/oppressive attributes which have become a veil for the attributes of the spirit. And they are the attributes that arise from this [lower bodily] aspect, whether they are [considered] good attributes such as animal generosity and bravery, or blameworthy and ugly like anger. For the lion is brave and the rooster is generous, and the animal generosity in man is egoistic and blameworthy, and animal bravery in him is egoistic and ugly.[405]

Locating the desires and instincts such as anger in man's animal soul follows the Aristotelian scheme which Avicenna and al-Ghazālī also adhere to. Motion, desire and perception were considered the function of the animal soul. Al-Baghdādī here is referenccing al-Ghazālī's *Iḥyā'* which asserts that man can harness the potentially blameworthy characteristics of the lower soul in accordance with his higher nature.[406] Hence, al-Baghdādī characterizes the attributes of the ego and spirit as "additions" or "relational" (*iḍāfa*) which explains that the attributes are blameworthy when they belong to the ego, but praiseworthy when they belong to the spirit.

[405] Al-Baghdādī, *Tuḥfat al-barara,* 38.
[406] Fakhry, *Ethical theories*, 196.

By positing that man shares some aspect with the celestial bodies, we may reasonably speculate that this is a reference to the heart, the equivalent of the rational soul, which was commonly associated with the celestial spheres and planets.[407] In this case we would not necessarily need to posit a different framework from that of al-Ghazālī's regarding the attributes since most thinkers would place reason outside the remit of the animal soul and human ego and associate it with the heavenly spheres, the "higher bodies" al-Baghdādī mentions here. In al-Ghazālī's thought this is equivalent to the rational soul which is immaterial, non-bodily and specific to man.[408]

That al-Ghazālī's influence is pervasive throughout this passage is obvious, and seen more strikingly as al-Baghdādī continues his discussion. He goes on to criticise the same theories of attributes which are criticised in al-Ghazālī's book of anger in the *Iḥyā'*. Here al-Baghdādī claims that certain "philosophers" have misunderstood the nature of attributes:

> And from this you learn of the shortcomings in the reasoning of the philosophers in apprehending the realities, since they set forth in their speech on purification and adornment that, he who does not purify himself from the blameworthy attributes, is not inculcated with the praiseworthy attributes, because it has two sources, and those [attributes] which spring forth from the attributes of animals, plants and inanimate objects which are present within man are blameworthy and those that spring forth from the source of the attributes of the spirit are good. And they did not know that from the blameworthy characteristics in the manifest, are not blameworthy in reality like anger.
>
> For if the servant rids himself of the ego and its attributes and is inculcated with the light of the spirit and its beauty, and nearness to God has overcome him, and "he does

[407] For example in al-Baghdādī's use of the term *kawākib al-qalb.*

[408] Treiger, *Inspired Knowledge*, 18.

> not cease to draw nearer to Him with supererogatory worship, until He loves him." And if the love of the True emerges, He becomes for him his hearing, sight and hand, in accordance with the famous *ḥadīth.* And so he is angered with God's anger and content with His contentedness.[409]

Al-Ghazālī, in his book on anger, explains that God has placed anger in man as a "fire" in the heart which functions as an impetus to overcome harm and danger. Al-Ghazālī describes it as stemming from an animal "desire" or *shahwa,* which is necessary for man's survival, for example making him search for food. Al-Ghazālī goes on to explain that not being able to be angry at all is a deficiency, as the person will have no motivation for self sacrifice (*ḥammiyya)*, and that those who have posited that one is capable of being rid of anger completely, and those who have said that it is impossible to be rid of it, stand on weak foundations. Instead, with the realisation that all things are obedient to the command of God, man realises the futility of being angered by worldly things. Al-Ghazālī explains that due to the realisation of God's unity, and with the heart being occupied with more important desires, the influence of anger will weaken and his anger will be "for God."[410]

Al-Baghdādī draws on this discussion of anger in al-Ghazalī's *Iḥyā'* here but his conclusion stresses the unity of man and God in terms of attributes much more than al-Ghazālī. Unlike al-Baghdādī, al-Ghazālī's *Iḥyā'* does not describe the Sufi being angry with God's anger. Rather, man's attributes begin to align with the will of God. Al-Baghdādī's discussion of attributes describes the manifestation of God's attributes through man as reflections which are neither the same nor different to the attributes themselves.[411] This accords with al-Baghdādī's framework of God's attributes being

[409] Al-Baghdādī, *Tuḥfat al-barara,* 37.
[410] Al-Ghazālī, *Iḥyā',* vol.4, 596-612.
[411] See chapter 2 section 1.iii.

manifested by the human body due to God's dominion over the soul which commands the body.

The importance of this development is to craft three distinct general ranks in which the soul may find itself, that of the ego, the spirit and God. Each rank results in certain attributes and behaviours and can therefore be used to describe certain spiritual and religious attitudes which can be applied to institutions or groups. Al-Ghazālī's theories become important here since he opposes the notion that certain attributes must be negated entirely. That supposedly base attributes like anger can become the noble attributes of God for al-Baghdādī means that there can be a progression from the ascetic, detached states of the spirit, which bring the Sufi back to worldly affairs upon completion once the person's innate animal attributes are commanded by God.

The attributes of the spirit for al-Baghdādī function as a trap along the path. They cause the Sufi to become arrogant and assume that he has attained the final stages of the path. This is crucial in al-Baghdādī's understanding of antinomian behaviour, this incomplete stage causes confusion and is responsible for causing the person to believe that they can dispense with ritual obligations. Hence, he draws on al-Ghazālī here for the very specific purpose of characterising the correct usage of the base attributes as the most perfected state, while anyone believing in the ability to negate them completely is characterised as being misguided. This is seen more clearly as al-Baghdādī continues:

> And it is made certain that some anger is praiseworthy and some generosity is blameworthy. For the attributes of the ego in their entirety are veils to the spirit... And if the seeker takes to removing the love of the world from his ego and to remove desires from it with austerities, then according to the extent of which austerities remove the covering of the path from the perceiving eye, he achieves unveiling (*yukāshaf*) with the

> apprehensions of the spirit and the realities of the spiritual world until the unveiling of the curtain. And the secret of this station is not specific to the original religion [of Islam] (*ḥanafiyya)*, or Christianity, or Judaism or Zoroastrianism. For anyone who strives a true striving and is committed to cutting the link to these blameworthy attributes and halted their substance, has matured to this high station. And it is because of this secret that many of the Christian monks (*rahābīn)* have achieved unveiling, despite their apostasy and misguidedness, in greater numbers than the arrogant leaders of the Muslims. Those who have been [deceived] by the terms of "belief" and "Islam" and have became absorbed in the love of fame and wealth.[412]

Al-Baghdādī's seems to approach a rather ecumenical conclusion regarding mystical experience here, asserting that non-Muslims can attain a high station of spiritual unveiling. Though it may seem to be a rather pluralistic position, this is in fact an attempt characterise the status of the spirit as incomplete. Al-Baghdādī argues that this is not completion at all and that completion may only be attained by following the example of the Prophet, and his example or *sunna*. Hence, this acknowledgement of the universality of the science of unveiling pre-empts any argument for the irrelevance of Islamic law for the perfected person. This becomes clearer as al-Baghdādī continues:

> For if the wayfarer reaches the attributes of the spirit by removing the love of the world from their hearts and breaking the desires from the ego, and some of the attributes of the spirit manifest to him and the realities of events in the hidden are revealed to him, and future events [are also revealed to him], at this point the wayfaring Muslim is distinguished from the [Christian] monk. And the monk remains in his station since his religion was abrogated by the law (*sharīʿat*) of the master of the first and last of [the prophets].[413]

[412] Al-Baghdādī, *Tuḥfat al-barara,* 37.
[413] Al-Baghdādī, *Tuḥfat al-barara,* 37.

The mention of other religions here also references common themes in Sufi poetry and rhetoric. Christian monks, along with Zoroastrians and members of other faiths are often characterised as being superior to "externalist" Muslims, or those who have not grasped the truth of God. Such glorifications are pervasive in 'Aṭṭār's poetry for example.[414] These images were also associated with other themes of profane activities such as wine drinking, monasteries and idol worship which suggested that the infidelity of these groups only pertained to a literalist conception. Hence they could be used to extol the virtues of the "inner" aspects of religion which Sufis wished to emphasise in their poems.[415] Here al-Baghdādī maintains a less provocative position as the non-Muslim mystic is made greater than the literalist, but incomplete when compared to the Muslim Sufi. Here, al-Baghdādī attempts to mitigate the potential subversive symbolism of the non-Muslim to undermine the religious law by incorporating it into his discussion of attributes. This also highlights the relevance of prophetology for distinguishing between the levels of a literalist, a spiritualist and the perfected, as prophets such as Jesus and Moses come to symbolise Christianity and Judaism. Judaism is equated with literalism, while Christianty is equated with "spiritualism."

Al-Baghdādī then goes on to explain that the incomplete wayfarer who remains dominated by the spirit will be of the "losers" in the hereafter though they believe that they are on the path of truth due to their spiritual unveilings and "perceiving what most have not perceived." He describes this as the state of "most Muslims" and says that this is one of God's traps. He describes them as perceiving some of the realities stored within them, but never unveiling themselves to The Real, or God (*al-ḥaqq*). And ultimately such a state leads to suffering in the hereafter due to the denial of completion and the inability to "unveil" God fully, which he describes as the punishment for those who have attained the state of the spirit. He argues that

[414] Lewisohn, 'Sufi Symbolism', 260-261.

[415] Ernst, *Words*, 75.

ultimately it is only with the alignment to the Prophet that one may manifest the attributes of God.[416]

Towards the end of the chapter al-Baghdādī reminds the reader that in Islamic tradition, both Jesus and Moses asked God to render them followers of the prophet Muḥammad. For Moses this is because of his inability to move beyond the ego, and for Jesus this is explained as an inability to achieve perfection due to the overwhelming "lights" of the spirit, as al-Baghdādī explains:

> And likewise Jesus peace be upon him, was dominated by the attributes of the spirit. For he did not take pleasure in the bodily things and was not tested by the desires of the ego and so God raised him to the station of the spirituals... However, just as the attributes of the ego are dark veils, so are the attributes of the spirit, and of light, veils, for God most high is seventy thousand veils of light and darkness. So Jesus traversed, in his wayfaring, the dark egoistic attributes and remained in the spiritual enlightened attributes. And that is because it is possible to emerge from the darkened egoistic attributes with the power of the light of the spirit, and it is not possible to emerge from the light of the spirit except by the attraction of The Real praise be to him, which is attached to belovedness. And it is impossible for The Real, praise be to him, to bestow/designate (*yattaṣif*) anyone with the perfection of beloved-ness unless they follow (*mutāba'at*) the Prophet (*al-muṣṭafā).*[417]

Here al-Baghdādī clarifies his earlier pluralistic statement by asserting that both Moses and Jesus, the two prophets and messengers symbolising Judaism and Christianity, were incomplete. This results in an argument for the exclusivity of Islam, and the need to follow the Prophet in order to achieve salvation. It also stratifies the Sufi path as Moses is equated to an initiate while Jesus represents an intermediary. While this discussion

[416] Al-Baghdādī, *Tuḥfat al-barara,* 36-38.
[417] Al-Baghdādī, *Tuḥfat al-barara,* 39.

may seem to be specifically directed at non-Muslims, the scope of the question al-Baghdādī aims to answer is very much attached to tensions within Sufism regarding the law.

The thrust of al-Baghdādī's argument in this passage links spiritual completion to adherence to the prophetic custom and by extension, Islamic law. Here, he draws on a number of concepts which were important for establishing the formalised relationship of shaykh and disciple. Jesus here represents the intermediate Sufi who is barred from completion due to the blinding light of the spiritual veils while Moses is barred from completion by the darkness of the ego. Here the Prophet acts as a shaykh to the incomplete Moses and Jesus. Hence, this discussion is made relevant to the institutionalisation of Sufism.

Here, adherence to the law and the institutional conception of the shaykh and disciple are intimately linked by al-Baghdādī's theoretical framework. The attributes of the ego and spirit need to be transcended in order for the Sufi to manifest the attributes of God and this can only be achieved by following the tradition of the Prophet, as the disciple follows the shaykh who represents the prophet. Eventually the chapter culminates in a description of perfection which emphasises that it is impossible to become complete without adherence to the law and the way of the Prophet as he states:

> And if the honest Muslim wayfarer attains the station of the spirituals, he is welcomed by the benevolences of the Real, and experiences the breezes of [God's] benevolence from the winds of providence. And so he is between two things, spiritual flight and Godly abduction. And with this is a lofty state and high station. And the image/form of perfection is that it remains in him after the opaqueness of the attributes of the ego [are removed?]. And if it is extremely subdued, and God manifests to him with the attribute of majesty which does not allow for anything to remain or to be left, and

> destroys that opaqueness which remains of the attributes of the ego. But the manifestations of the lights of the spirit are flashes for the initiate in the darkness of the ego. For it does not remain for a [prolonged] time. And if the traces of wayfaring [re]-emerge, the attributes of the spirit and the opaqueness of the ego return as they were before the manifestation, and he does not cease [oscillating between] becoming and unbecoming... Until eternal provedence transfers him to worshipfulness, and its image is adherence [to the prophet] (*mutāba'a*). And God extracts him with worshipfulness and adherence, from the opaqueness of the ego and the lights of the spirit, and there is found within him neither light nor darkness from any of the attributes of humanness. And he is not heavenly or earthly, for he stands with God.[418]

This equation of completion with a state beyond the veils of the spirit and ego is described here as only being possible by adherence to the Prophet. Here is perhaps the most explicit expression of the interdependence between Sufi theory and institutionalised behaviour expressed through prophetology. The entirety of the passage reads as a description of the psychological progression of the Sufi, yet it is anchored in the notion of the need for a guide who represents the Prophet. Finally al-Baghdādī finishes this discussion in the 9th chapter with the following:

> [And the Shaykh Abū Yazīd] has said, "I ascended to the presence, and so I crossed the created things and I reached the enclosures and was veiled by the greatest veil I have ever witnessed. So I said, my God what is this veil? And He said, it is the veil of the ego. So I said, how is it gotten rid of? He said, by following the beloved." This is what clung to my mind from a long story. And know that it is from the signs of acceptance that fear and dread increase. And everyone who has come to a higher position, and a loftier stage, and a more completed nearness, increases in dread...

[418] Al-Baghdādī, *Tuḥfat al-barara,* 39.

> And he who does not believe in God's plan (*makr Allah)* and fears doubt, cannot dispense from having a guide to beseech to, and to cling to his rope and hold fast to his rein. And the guide of guides, and the master of the first and last is Muhammad.[419]

Here al-Baghdādī introduces a further argument against antinomianism, marking out the proper psychological response to nearness to God with fear, dread and humility. This defines the proper response to an increase in psycho-spiritual rank as one which would adhere to the law due to fear. By the end, al-Baghdādī returns to discussing the need for a guide and again emphasises that in order to overcome spiritual barriers and attain completion, the Sufi must follow the Prophet. This is also a way in which al-Baghdādī can stress the disciple's need for a Sufi shaykh since he acts as an intermediary for the Prophet. Ultimately, completion is defined as total adherence to the Prophet and the religion of Islam since Muhammad is the only Prophet who overcame the spirit and ego and manifested the attributes of God.

This conception of the Prophet obviously captured the imagination of Sufi thinkers at the time. 'Aṭṭār for example repeats in his work, many aspects of this discussion of prophetology as Qamar ul-Hudā has highlighted that 'Aṭṭār's meditation on the written form of the name Muhammad in his *Muṣībat nāma* attributed one *mīm* to the manifest world (*'ālam*) and the other to the hidden world. The encompassing of both worlds represented the uniqueness of Muhammad as a Prophet.[420] This is strikingly similar to al-Baghdādī's theory of attributes and its relationship to prophetology. Therefore, Hudā's assertion that these are the first allusions to this concept of prophetology seems untenable with what we have presented here. Al-Baghdādī reveals a highly systematic and theoretically coherent prophetology that is much more developed than 'Aṭṭār's, and it may be that al-Baghdādī was his primary influence in this respect.

[419] Al-Baghdādī, *Tuḥfat al-barara,* 39.
[420] Ul-Hudā, *Striving*, 92.

4. Religious learning and Sufism

Though this discussion of attributes firmly places Islam and the Prophet at the core of the notion of perfection, al-Baghdādī's more polemical statement that many non-Muslims have ascended to greater degrees than Muslim scholars exposes a tension between the Sufi system of learning and the Islamic sciences. Those statements clearly assumed the priority of psycho-spiritual training in relation to scriptural knowledge. This affords Sufism a claim to knowledge which is independent of the religious sciences. Despite this, al-Baghdādī attempts to ground Sufi knowledge within the framework of the legal tradition, but never fully resolves the potential for the two to contradict one another.

Hence the need to follow (*mutāba'at*) the Prophet in attaining completion, though it stresses the importance adherence to Islam, does not necessarily equate to an adherence to the law as articulated by legal scholars. The concept is far greater than that as he saw Sufi shaykhs as representatives of the prophet by virtue of having attained a similar spiritual rank to him. Psycho-spiritual rank is certainly prioritised over the religious science and is evident throughout al-Baghdādī's *Tuḥfa*. In the 5th chapter of the *Tuḥfa* regarding seclusion, al-Baghdādī answers the question of whether or not one should engage in studying the Qur'an, Hadith and the *sharī'a* during periods of seclusion. Here we are confronted with a seemingly negative view of the study of the religious sciences.

Al-Baghdādī argues that the initiate is not capable of properly understanding the scripture, or using it according to his spiritual needs. The only example al-Baghdādī provides where the disciple is required to read the Qur'an in seclusion is in the case of one who has already memorised it and is at risk of forgetting what he has learnt,

because according to him, forgetting what one has memorised of the Qur'an is a sin.[421] By the end of his discussion al-Baghdādī concludes:

> For you today, know the Qur'an before knowing belief (*īmān*). And know that if the disciple who has not memorised from the Quran [anything] apart from the opening [*al-fātiḥa*] of the book and the chapter of *ikhlāṣ*, and does not read them apart from when he is in prayer and is then distanced from the abode of arrogance and comes to the abode of joyousness, and has devoted himself to God in worship... Until he attains certainty is from those who have won [bliss]... And the person who memorises and completes [the reading of] the Quran every day and night, but whose his heart is full of love for the world and polluted with malice, envy and blameworthy characteristics is among the lost.[422]

Al-Baghdādī clearly asserts that the psycho-spiritual rank of the disciple is the primary cause of his praiseworthy or blameworthy nature. The study of the Islamic sciences is irrelevant to this and could even prove harmful as al-Baghdādī explains that scripture could be misinterpreted as instructions to act in a manner which is pleasing to the ego if the ego is dominant over the person's soul. Hence, scholastic religious learning does not necessarily affect the spiritual rank of the individual positively. Sufi training is the most important form of training since it affects the person's insight in every other area of learning.

Such a position however was not necessarily a controversial one. Turning away from scriptural learning at the beginning of the Sufi path is common in the biographies of many famous Sufis during this time. Abū Sa'īd was reported to have abandoned the religious sciences, and al-Ghazālī famously gave up his intellectual pursuits and instead

[421] Al-Baghdādī, *Tuḥfat al-barara,* 25.
[422] Al-Baghdādī, *Tuḥfat al-barara,* 25.

practiced Sufism, abandoning his post at the *Niẓāmiyya* school in Baghdad.[423] In addition, Kubrā abandoned his scholastic religious training in favour of the Sufi path and was rebuked for returning to his classes on religious sciences after turning to Sufism. This did not mean that the two modes of learning were at odds, rather there seems to be an attempt to establish hierarchy of learning here where the Sufi path is prior. Furthermore, Alexandrin has pointed out that in Kubrā's case, the two modes of learning are reconcilable.[424]

This hierarchical relationship between Sufism and scholasticism is clear in al-Baghdādī's work. For him, this was not a rejection of scholastic learning, but an adherence to the notion that the disciplining of the soul is prior to scholasticism. Al-Baghdādī tells us that the state of the soul informs interpretations scripture for example. Al-Baghdādī only stipulates that the Sufi should avoid the religious sciences in seclusion as the goal of seclusion was to control thought impressions (*khawāṭir*) and elevate the soul to a greater rank. However, one could engage with scholasticism after undergoing the proper Sufi training. Proper scholastic understanding is dependent on a more sublime soul which ensures that scholastic training will not be influenced by the negative thought impressions which enter the mind. Kubrā himself only produced scholastic works such as his *tafsīr* after having completed his Sufi training.[425]

Although al-Baghdādī is keen to bar the Sufi from breaking laws on which there is widespread consensus, in theory he maintains that the Sufi shaykh by virtue of divine inspiration, and access to knowledge through visions, is free to break what he terms the prima facie law (*ẓāhir al-shar'*) while adhering to its reality. The significance of this distinction however is not felt until the final chapters of the *Tuḥfa.* Al-Baghdādī seems

[423] Al-Munawwar, *Asrār al-tawḥīd,* 91.
[424] Alexandrin, 'The Sciences of Intuition', 291.
[425] Alexandrin, 'The Sciences of Intuition', 292.

to carefully craft this discussion throughout the text which progresses slowly from a rather conservative position in the first chapter to an explicit acknowledgement of tension in the 10th chapter.

At the very beginning of the *Tuḥfa,* in answering a query regarding which legal school the Sufis should follow, al-Baghdādī attempts to diminish the need to adhere to any one particular legal schools by asserting that the Sufi should adhere to the most stringent rulings which deny the desires of his ego in order to tame it. Al-Baghdādī argues that the Sufi can choose from any of the accepted legal schools in order to achieve this.

Although al-Baghdādī states this very generally in the first chapter of the *Tuḥfa,* namely, that "our path" chooses the most stringent of rulings, this does not seem to be consistent with the arguments and examples in later chapters.[426] The notion that the Sufi chooses a ruling from among existing accepted rulings runs throughout the *Tuḥfa* in the later chapters, when it comes to the decisions of the shaykh, al-Baghdādī allows a great degree of freedom in deciding which rulings to follow. The earlier assertion that the most stringent ruling should be chosen seems to be specific to the initiate who has not subdued his ego. This is hinted at when he clarifies his statement saying, "the etiquettes which are attached to the states and stations differ according to the [varying] states and stations of the wayfarer."[427] By the time we have read on to the later chapters of the *Tuḥfa* a much more problematic tone emerges. Here, al-Baghdādī departs from his initial argument and frames the debate as a distinction between the exoteric and esoteric characteristics of the law:

> The orders of the law are divided into two. The first is that which has attained a consensus among the *umma* and the scholars (*'ulamā'*) and it is not for anyone to claim

[426] Al-Baghdādī, *Tuḥfat al-barara,* 1-2.
[427] Al-Baghdādī, *Tuḥfat al-barara,* 1-2.

> that he has received a sign [from God] and order to contradict it. For that is a disobedience, and there is no authority for the disobedient. The second is that upon which there has been disagreement in the opinion of the legal scholars (*mujtahidīn*). And the Prophet peace be upon him has said: "disagreement between my umma is a mercy." And it may be that the shaykh orders [the disciple], based on his insight, to do something that defies what was said by one of the legal scholars, in accordance with the saying of a different legal scholar... For the ruling of a *mujtahid* is based on the dictates of reasoned reflection (*ẓann*) and the ruling of the shaykh is based on signs from the Truth, or a sign from the Prophet, peace be upon him, or the ruling of the heart during a state [in which he beholds] an image of the sign of the Truth.[428]

A clear hierarchy is seen here with Sufi modes of knowledge given precedence over legal reasoning. The scholar of law can never attain the same degree of certainty as the Sufi does through experiential knowledge. However, al-Baghdādī points out that the Sufis should only operate within the framework of the law, the Sufi shaykh is free to decide what to do, but it appears here to be in accordance with an existing opinion held by some legal scholar. This however is not possible in a case in which a consensus has been reached, and the Sufi is not allowed to break with it.

Given that there are a great number of issues on which various opinions could have been obtained, this does provide the Sufi with a degree of freedom within the legal framework. However if we turn to the 10th chapter of the *Tuḥfa* a much more forceful tone emerges. This chapter deals with the issue of keeping company with sultans, oppressors and the misguided as well as the *samā'*. Here, al-Baghdādī details a story where the shaykh Abū Sa'īd orders his *khādim* (superintendent of the *khānqa*) to go to the chief of police asking for a donation. The policeman mockingly tells the *khādim* that he had forcibly taken twenty dirhams from a boy earlier that day which he offers, and

[428] Al-Baghdādī, *Tuḥfat al-barara*, 15.

the *khādim* accepts "trusting in the spiritual insight of the shaykh." Later, a boy enters the *khanqa* and offers his dirhams to the shaykh and apologises explaining that the policeman had taken the remainder of the money from him by force. Abū Sa'īd replies that the dirhams have already reached him.[429] Commenting on this, al-Bagdhādī explains:

> And regarding the great and advanced ones from among the shaykhs, for they stand firmly with God, the ones who have transferred their matters to God, and have removed themselves from the workings of the spirits and hearts, which are greater than the egos. And their rising is with God, and their sitting is with God, and their action is with God, and their resting is with God... and their taking is with God, and their abstention is with God... If they abstain from something then it is not for anyone to object to their abstention. And if they take anything, it is not for anyone to object to their taking [of it]. Because the insight of others is in the perceptible form of things, and their insight is in the realities of things.[430]

Al-Baghdādī then explains:

> Whoever looks to the acceptance of the money which was forcibly taken, based on what is perceptible, must blame him [Abū Sa'īd]. However, he was knowledgeable in the reality of his command and the chief of police's state and the shortcomings of the boy... And these are authoritative signs from the Truth. And of those who have received mercy from God and who have been taught divine knowledge by him, if their disposition is such that it accords with defying the law in its perceptible form, then it is by sanction of God's command and according to his law (*sharī'atahu*) in reality [that they do], just as Khidr was with Moses... And this is not allowed to any of the initiates, and that is why Abū Sa'īd, may God have mercy on him, said "whoever saw me in my

[429] Al-Baghdādī, *Tuḥfat al-barara,* 41.
[430] Al-Baghdādī, *Tuḥfat al-barara,* 41.

beginning became righteous (*ṣiddīqan*), and whoever saw me in my completion became a heretic (*zindīqan*)." For the task of the initiate is to obey the perceptible law.[431]

These two passages appear at first to be completely at odds with the passages we have quoted earlier where al-Baghdādī was keen to ensure the reader that the Sufi had to at least choose from among the diversity of legal opinion between the legal scholars. Yet, the acceptance of the money by the shaykh in this anecdote seems to contradict this. Here it is argued that the shaykh is free to break the law from the point of view of an outside observer.

The reference to a story from Abū Sa'īd's biography is significant here. Abū Sa'īd stands out as intricately linked to the Saljuq state, receiving patronage from the famous vizier Niẓām al-Mulk and establishing connections with a number of courtly figures. As we have noted earlier, the biographies of Abū Sa'īd were written at around the same time when al-Baghdādī was writing the *Tuḥfa.* Sufis capitalised on the biographical and hagiographical accounts of Abū Sa'īd in constructing the ideal relationship between their communities and political rulers in the 12th century. Many of the anecdotes in the *Kashf asrār al-tawḥīd* attempt to construct an ideal relationship between Sufis and rulers by stressing the need for rulers to patronise Sufis and receive their blessings in exchange for legitimation.[432]

It is no surprise then that this passage is found within the 10th chapter of the *Tuḥfa*, discussing the permissibility of the Sufi keeping relations with the ruling classes. The aim of this chapter is not to discuss whether it is acceptable to transgress the law but to explain the shaykh's interactions with the ruling classes. Al-Baghdādī here provides us with an ambiguous example of "breaking" the law. We are told that the money was

[431] Al-Baghdādī, *Tuḥfat al-barara,* 42.
[432] Safi, *The politics,* 141.

intended for the Sufi lodge, and the shaykh simply accepted money which was meant to reach his lodge anyway. In this way, "the knowledge of the things stored in the hidden" which al-Baghdādī mentions at the end of the passage, in Abū Sa'īd's case, is described as a type of clairvoyance.

Al-Baghdādī states quite clearly that only the shaykh has the privilege of breaking the perceptible form of the law based on divine insight, while on the other hand he may only order the disciple to break with one interpretation of the law in favour of another. However, al-Baghdādī is keen to point out that the insight of the Sufi adheres to the reality of the *sharī'a* and is therefore not licence to completely disregard its statutes. For him it is not a question of ever being able to break the law, but rather an ability to perceive the reality of a given situation and arrive at the best judgement. The shaykh's opinion is still subject to the law, but it is not understood by those who have not achieved a similar rank.

Yet, although the example provided is ambiguous, in theory the tension between knowledge through divine insight and knowledge through scholastic training is not decisively resolved by al-Baghdādī. While divine insight bends to the confines of scholasticism in some cases, the reverse also seems possible. The example of Abū Sa'īd accepting forcibly confiscated money, which was intended for the Sufi shaykh in the first place, is a far more ambiguous action than dispensing with obligatory prayers for example, which is something al-Baghdādī outrightly rejects. Here, the intention to gift the money to the shaykh acts as a loophole which allows Abū Sa'īd to break the manifest law. In this example the definition of the hidden law is simply a more complete understanding of the events which had taken place through clairvoyance. It therefore does not describe the hidden law as anything other than a complete knowledge of the facts of the case.

Al-Baghdādī certainly does not approve of transgressing the law explicitly, however the ambiguity between divine insight and the law is not fully resolved here. Ultimately, al-Baghdādī seems to accept that the Sufi will inevitably have false accusations levelled against him in his quoting of Abū Sa'īd's statement that whoever saw him during his shaykh-hood viewed him as a heretic. Al-Baghdādī seems to say that there will always be critics who will suspect the Sufis of antinomianism. Hence, dispensation from the manifest law is allowed to exist in the framework of the Sufi institution which limits its expression to the authority of the shaykh. This discussion, should not be interpreted as al-Baghdādī giving licence for breaking the law in any meaningful way. Rather, given the context of the discussion, in a chapter regarding the relationship between Sufis and rulers, it would be more appropriate to understand this passage as an expression of the elitist conception of the Sufi shaykh who is given authority to make judgements which may contradict that of a legal scholars. This elitism is paralleled by increasingly hierarchical structures within the Sufi institution itself.[433] Hence what may initially seem to be a discussion of antinomianism is in fact an argument for the elite status of the completed Sufi. This goes some way towards explaining why al-Baghdādī does not definitively resolve the tension between law and divine inspiration since it is necessary to maintain the shaykh's right to dispense with legal rulings and lay claim to greater political authority.

As Muslim society was increasingly reliant on the *madrasa, khānqa* and *futuwwa* organisations for political stability and continuity in this period, it became important to belong to a certain group or organisation which could provide routes to political engagement. While the rulers sought to gain legitimacy through patronage of such institutions, the poor could also protect their interests by attaching themselves to such

[433] Anjum, 'Mystical authority', 77-78.

an institution. For example, having their property constitute an endowment (*waqf)* to come under the protection of a Sufi school.[434]

However, attachment to a Sufi group often had wider implications during this period. Competing patrician interests caused warring and violence between Shafi'ī and Ḥanafī factions in the 10th and 11th centuries. These institutions were the main vehicles through which the authority and influence of one group could be established. Yet these attacks did not focus on the variance in legal methods, rather Ḥanafīs resorted to denouncing the theological positions of Ash'arism which was associated with Shafi'ism at the time. Shifting the accusations to the theology of the Shafi'īs allowed for criticism of the school since its reputation as a legitimate legal institution was not questionable.[435] Sufism in the 10th and 11th centuries, in most cases was aligned to Shafi'ī institutions too, and offered the prospect of an attachment to a broader network of institutions.

That belonging to a Sufi group was increasingly beneficial is seen in discussions of the problem of *tashabbuh* (behaving as, or pretending to be like a Sufi) is discussed by many prominent Sufi writers of the 11th and 12th centuries including Abū al-Najīb al-Suhrawardī.[436] 'Umar al-Suhrawardī formalised the affiliation of these "imitators" and propagated a more widespread and populist Sufi community.[437] In addition to discussions regarding imitators, the usage of the terms *'āmma* (the common people) and *khāṣṣa* (the elite) by Sufi authors also indicates the increasing hierarchical notions present in Sufism in the 12th and 13th century. Muslim scholars had always distinguished themselves from the commoners as the "elite." Yet in the 10th century, Sufis began to

[434] Lambton, 'Awqāf in Persia', 307.
[435] Bulliet, *The Patricians,* 36; 60-61.
[436] Salamah-Qudsi, 'The Idea of Tashabbuh', 177-181.
[437] Salamah-Qudsi, 'The Idea of Tashabbuh', 195.

refer to themselves as the "elite of the elite" around Junayd al-Baghdādī's time.[438] Al-Ghazālī also employs this tripartite distinction of society in a letter to a Saljuq vizier distinguishing between the masses, the devout, and the Sufis.[439]

Jonathon Brown contrasts Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī's derogatory usage of the term '*āmma* when referring to the general populace with the more technical usage, referring to the stations Sufis may achieve in order to mark hierarchies within the community in the writings of the later Kubrawī Shaykh Nūr al-Dīn Isfarā'inī (d. 639/1242) as well as Ibn 'Arabī. Brown argues that the maturity of the term indicates a more accommodating form of Sufism which spread among the masses. Yet it also indicates an increasing emphasis on the internal structure of the order, distinguishing elite Sufis from "common" Sufis, highlighting the increased attachment to Sufi orders among the general populace, as well as its transition from a marginal movement to the mainstream.[440]

However, while a trend of increasing institutionalisation and popularisation of Sufism is clearly discernable in the 12th and 13th centuries, we should not assume that this was due to the acceptance of a once unacceptable religious movement. Furthermore, as we have argued here, not all Sufi thinkers necessarily embraced a relaxed attitude towards affiliation despite the spread and popularity of Sufism. For example that al-Baghdādī maintains an exclusivist notion of discipleship while also according the shaykh a prominent public role and allowing the community to spread.

In light of this, Brown's assertion that Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī's adoption of Sufism incorporated a previously heterodox movement into Islamic Orthodoxy seems

[438] Anjum, 'Mystical authority', 72.
[439] Brown, 'The Last Days', 104.
[440] Brown, 'The Last Days', 106.

problematic.[441] Sufism throughout the 11th century, though not as widespread as it seems to have become later on, had been very much tied to the development of the Islamic legal traditions, particularly the Shafi'ī school of law, al-Qushayrī for example equates Sufism with the Shafi'ī school.[442] Margaret Malamud has also shown that the *madrasa* functioned as a space where students could study Sufism, and that Sufis were often members of the '*ulāmā*' in the 11th century, well before al-Ghazālī's conversion to Sufism.[443] Yet, even Malamud's arguments are couched in the premise that Sufism, prior to its attachment to Shafi'ism had been outside the mainstream, an assertion which Melchert has shown to be problematic in light of evidence that even before its identification with Sufism, Malāmatism had been central to the religious establishment.[444]

Hence, the development of an elitist self-conception among Sufis does not indicate a movement from the unorthodox to the mainstream. There was continuity between previous mystical trends and the rise of Sufism and there was always a connection between mysticism and legal institutions, which only became more distinct in later centuries. The increasing institutionalisation of Sufism can be seen to coincide with similar developments in other branches of Islamic learning such as the *madrasa* well before al-Ghazālī's defence of Sufism. There is also a potential contradiction in asserting that al-Ghazālī popularised Sufism and yet maintained that the masses should not be permitted to partake in it. Moreover, Brown's claim that later Sufis did not project notions of elitism into the lives of earlier Sufis is simply not accurate.[445] For example 'Aṭṭār reflects a distinction between commoners, religious scholars and Sufis in his

[441] Brown, 'The Last Days', 105.
[442] Malamud, 'Sufi Organisations', 429.
[443] Malamud, 'Sufi Organisations', 430.
[444] Melchert, 'Sufism', 242.
[445] Brown, 'The Last Days', 104.

accounts of Dhū al-Nūn where the Sufi is certainly ranked above the scholar.[446] This attests to the fact that such notions had currency even in the 13th century.

Sufism, even when exclusivist in its tone, and more selective in who to officially allow into its ranks was always intertwined with the religious establishment of medieval Islamic society, could still prove to be popular, and could still fulfil important public roles. In analysing al-Baghdādī's discussion of shaykh and disciple, a school could have a rather insular internal structure while still emphasising service to the general populace. Thus, even when Sufis such as al-Ghazālī espoused a hardened attitude towards the general populace, we cannot assume that they shunned them and barred them from participating in the activities of the Sufi lodge. Elitism played an important political role in asserting the primacy of the Sufi institution. Discussion of antinomianism and unorthodoxy therefore ought to be considered for their relevance to elitism and society, and not limited to concerns over emerging antinomian mystical brotherhoods.

While al-Ghazālī's elitist notions regarding the general populace were not necessarily reproduced by prominent mystics such as Ibn al-'Arabī in the early 13th century, there is clear evidence that such notions persisted, as evinced in the *Tuḥfa* where society is arranged within a four-part hierarchy with Sufis at the top. Elements of these divisions are also found in al-Rāzī's *Mirṣād*.[447] Al-Baghdādī, when addressing the question of whether a Sufi should interact with the general population or sultans and rulers, often refers to the saying of the prophet that to mix with people and patiently bear the pain they inflict is better than not to mix with them at all.[448] Al-Baghdādī often portrays engagement with wider society as a test or struggle that the Sufi should bear when necessary.

[446] 'Aṭṭār, *Tadhkirat,* 105.

[447] Al-Rāzī, *Mirṣād,* 445-569.

[448] Al-Baghdādī, *Tuḥfat al-barara,* 40.

This undoubtedly indicates a negative view of the ruling classes and wider society, we should read al-Baghdādī as arguing for the engagement of Sufis with society precisely because it is a test they must face. Furthermore, reintegrating into society is a necessary step in transcending the spirit and reaching the presence of God and completion.[449] Sufis could then insist on engagement with wider society, despite elitism and negative notions of the general populace. We should therefore not assume that harsh statements regarding commoners and the political class resulted in an isolationist Sufi community.

Brown's reading limits Sufism to one trajectory, moving from a marginal place in society to the mainstream, accompanied by a move from elitism to populism. Such a reading neglects to understand the multiple ways in which Sufism developed at the time. In al-Baghdādī's case elitism serves to assert a Kubrawī Sufi identity in the wake of the Suhrawardiyya who espoused a more populist message. In addition, it also fortifies the Sufi community against political interests in a time of uncertainty. Al-Ghazālī was also concerned with fortifying the Sufi institution against political influences which to a large extent explains his elitist attitude.[450]

Elitism in al-Baghdādī's case reveals that by his time there was an increasingly stark self-conscious distinction between Sufi institutions and legal institutions which had previously been closely intertwined. This is evident in his diminishment of the connection of Sufism to Shafi'ī law, stating that a ruling is chosen based on the insight of the shaykh or in order to defy the ego in the case of the initiate. This is a marked contrast to the close association between Sufism and Shafi'ism which is found in al-Qushayrī's work. Hence, al-Baghdādī's flexibility when it comes to the law is evidence of

[449] See Chapter 2.

[450] Karamustafa, 'The Ghazālī Brothers', 273.

the emergence of more confidently distinct institution. In this context, maintaining the ability to dispense with legal rulings in the form of divine insight is important. Hence the development of a hierarchy regarding dispensations regulates subversive expressions of religion while offering the Sufi shaykh some important freedoms.

5. Mystical experience and the case for normative behaviour

This tension between mystical experience and the religious law is revealed in other chapters of the *Tuḥfa.* In the 8th chapter of the book al-Baghdādī discusses the possibility of receiving a divine message or vision from God, ordering the Sufi to break the law. Al-Baghdādī does not deny the authenticity of such a message but characterises the phenomenon as a test stating:

> If there appears (*sanaḥat*) in the heart of the disciple a sign from God, praise be to him, to abandon a specific, obligatory act of worship, and the ego agrees with it, then that is a test and strife, and it is necessary for him to take refuge in God from God. The Prophet has said: "I take refuge in your bounty from your anger and I take refuge in your forgiveness from your punishment and I take refuge in you from you." I heard our shaykh Abu al-Jannāb al-Ḥāfiẓ [Najm al-Dīn Kubrā] say: "I heard Rūzbihān al-Miṣrī say, [I heard a voice] say to me once to abandon prayer, "for you have no need of it." And so I said, my Lord I can not endure that, order me to do something else." This is the nature of the protected ones. For the arrogant natured one, and those who have not been trained by a true shaykh, if he comes across something like this, he abandons his worship and God deceives him without him knowing.[451]

Here al-Baghdādī acknowledges that an order to abandon worship from God could occur in the Sufi's visionary experiences. However he does not seem to consider such

[451] Al-Baghdādī, *Tuḥfat al-barara,* 34-35.

an experience to be a genuine message from God. Such a vision is described as occuring due to the incompletion of the perceiver. Yet the possibility of such an occurrence is central to his argument for the need for institutionalisation. This threat of God's divine machinations, or *makr*, which al-Baghdādī refers to at various points in the text allows him to argue for the need of a shaykh who can guide the Sufi.

Again, the arrogant Sufi is characterised as one who has not been taught by a shaykh and has not cultivated the correct disposition to respond to the event as Rūzbihān al-Miṣrī had done. For the moment however, the questions that arise from the possibility of two opposing commands from God, one from scripture and another from spiritual vision or insight, is not theoretically resolved here. This again puts mystical experience in contention with Islamic law, and al-Baghdādī instead turns to the bond between shaykh and disciple to assure adherence to the law.

Stressing the need for a shaykh however does not systematically rule out dispensation from the law in theory, rather it is simply a strategy to temper antinomian behaviour. The closest al-Baghdādī comes to resolving these tensions between divine insight and the law in favour of normative behaviour and practice through a systematised discussion of psychology, is seen in his discussions of prayer and audition. Here al-Baghdādī draws on his psychological theories of the body manifesting the nature of the soul, and of physical perception as a medium for a spiritual truth. Regarding the obligatory prayers al-Baghdādī states:

> And I have seen the ignorant Sufis abandon obligatory prayer without a sign [from God]. And it is said that the wayfarer is required to be consistent with his prayer, and the unfortunate one did not know that prayer has a physical form (*qālib*) and a spirit (*rūḥan*). And its physical form is its image which is composed of the rules, Prophetic traditions and parts, and its spirit is presence (*ḥuḍūr*) and witnessing... and the physical

> form of prayer is like the physical form of man, and its spirit is like his spirit. And just as the spirit of man is not man [in his entirety] but is part of man, so too is the spirit of prayer not prayer itself but part of prayer. For as long as [man's] life remains, and the spirit remains attached to the frame [of the body], it is necessary for the [bodily frame] to adorn itself with the physical form of prayer, and the spirit with its spirit... And God has said to His Prophet... "And worship your Lord until you attain certainty," and the Qur'an commentators (*mufassirūn*) have agreed that what is meant by certainty here is death.[452]

Here we see that al-Baghdādī emphatically rejects that the completed Sufis could justifiably abandon the obligatory prayer for as long as they live. Having adopted a dualistic account of body and soul, al-Baghdādī reassures the reader that as long as the soul is attached to the body, the body must perform the actions of prayer. Al-Baghdādī's statement that one can dispense with prayer upon attaining certainty in death echoes Kubrā's writings. In the *Fawā'iḥ* Kubrā states that bodily existence represented by the elements will not be gotten rid of completely until the actual death, but the voluntary death of the Sufi which involves purification of the soul will remove some of these aspects.[453]

As we have discussed, Kubrā's treatise *al-Uṣūl al-'ashra,* develops the concept of voluntary death and posits that in order to avoid experiencing suffering in the hereafter one must become acquainted with death, and overcome bodily existence in this life, that way the soul will not suffer when it is forced to abandon the body.[454] This argument informs each of Kubrā's ten principles to which the Sufi must adhere. Al-Baghdādī develops Kubrā's ideas here in order to stress the importance of religious

[452] Al-Baghdādī, *Tuḥfat al-barara,* 35.
[453] Kubrā, *Fawā'iḥ,* 130.
[454] Zargar, 'The Ten Principles', 124.

practices and obligations. In Kubrā's treatise, only the physical death allows the attainment of complete knowledge and encountering one's lord.[455]

Al-Baghdādī's argument here is formulated as a response to the hypothetical claim that one can adhere to the spirit of prayer but not its physical form which is interesting in itself since the imagined claim seems to take body-soul dualism as a given. This indicates that al-Baghdādī attempts to preclude potential problematic conclusions in the adoption of body-soul dualism. Here al-Baghdādī's further systematised psychology builds upon Kubrā's ideas in order to argue against abandoning prayer. Firstly, despite the adoption of body-soul dualism, al-Baghdādī ensures that as long as the soul and body are attached, the body must perform the physical form of prayer. Secondly, the nature of the body, as the vehicle which expresses the soul, necessitates that prayer must manifest through the medium of the body.

Al-Baghdādī renders the physical world a manifestation of spiritual truths, in order to argue that there can be no adherence to the spirit of the law without also adhering to its bodily form. His statement that the spiritual aspect of prayer is not prayer in its entirety, just as man's soul is not fully man without the body, stresses the importance of the bodily world. The body must conform to the physical form of worship as long as it exists. This discussion parallels al-Ghazālī's *Mishkāt* where he explains that the manifest world parallels and represents the hidden world. Here al-Ghazālī states that the Prophetic narration that the angels do not visit one's house if a dog is present there is true both with regard to its hidden meaning (*sirr*) and apparent image (*ẓāhir*). He then explains that the intended meaning is that the house of the heart should be free from the dog of anger because it obstructs knowledge which is an angelic light. Nevertheless since the image represents the hidden meaning, it is important for the Muslim to conform to this narration in both its hidden and apparent meanings. He then explains

[455] Zargar, 'The Ten Principles', 124.

that some Sufis have made a grave mistake by abandoning their obligatory prayers while maintaining that they remain praying in their innermost hearts. He also mentions that he who abstracts the hidden from the apparent is a *bāṭinī,* meaning an Ismaili.[456] Hence, in his most systematic attempt to resolve the theoretical tension between completion and the law, al-Baghdādī builds upon both al-Ghazālī and Kubrā's thought.

This is not the only instance where al-Baghdādī stresses the importance of bodily existence to argue against antinomian behaviour. In his discussion of audition, al-Baghdādī asserted the need to sense the bodily sensation along with the spiritual sensation in order to comprehend the truths presented by the outer senses completely. Hence the physical senses has a spirit (*rūḥ*) which was independent of bodily particulars and above time and space, but did not represent the entirety of the experience.[457] The terminology employed in the discussion of prayer closely mirrors the discussion of music and physical sensation in al-Baghdādī's 10th chapter with regard to the bodily and spiritual aspects of sound. Moreover, in our analysis of audition in the *Tuḥfa,* we saw that true perfection of the senses required one to overcome the state of perceiving the spiritual sound while neglecting the physical. Hence, completion always involves a bodily manifestation for al-Baghdādī.

His discussion of the role of the senses in audition is highly relevant here. *Wajd* is an ecstatic state closely associated with ecstatic expressions (*shaṭḥ*) in Sufi thought.[458] *Wajd* was also commonly associated with the practice of audition as we have numerous descriptions of Sufis entering this state while listening to music and poetry. Sarrāj explained these often seemingly heretical utterances as the overflowing of a powerful

[456] Al-Ghazālī, *Mishkāt,* 73.

[457] See Chapter 2.

[458] See Avery, *The Psychology.*

experience of the divine, but which he considered more common amongst initiates and novices. These utterances were considered dangerous for the masses to hear but worthy of analysis and interpretation for the learned scholars. Despite this, some Sufis such as al-Ghazālī seem to have supported the execution of a Sufi who publicly expresses such utterances.[459]

One of the primary concerns of al-Baghdādī's discussion of *samā'* is its relationship to antinomian behaviour. Though this is not stated explicitly, al-Baghdādī's intention is clear as he defines the antinomian behaviours associated with audition as an incomplete state of listening.[460] Here, he characterises the incomplete Sufi as removed from their physical senses due to the force of the spiritual senses, whereas the completed Sufi would not be overwhelmed, and because of this he would hear God's speech through the unintelligible sounds of birdsong, ringing bells and creaking wells.

Emphasising the bodily world as a representation of the hidden world, or even God's speech, functions as an attempt to restrict subversive behaviour. Theophany is often considered for its potential heresy and is cited as one of the main sources of tension between Sufis and those who insist on maintaining God's transcendence. In al-Baghdādī's thought the relationship between the manifest and hidden world which parallel each other is a powerful argument which reinforces normative behaviour.

6. Wayfaring and spiritual flight

In al-Baghdādī's thought, conceptions of antinomianism are closely related to the way in which the Sufi path is envisaged. When a Sufi author identifies behaviours and experiences as either belonging to the state of beginners, intermediates or perfected

[459] Ernst, *Words,* 12-14.

[460] See Chapter 2.

Sufis, we learn a great deal about the author's attitude to antinomianism. These stages in al-Baghdādī's work are often identifiable with the various terms used to describe the path. Here al-Baghdādī's develops these terms with regard to their relationship to notions of obligation (*taklīf*). Notions of attraction and reaching the end point are central to al-Baghdādī's discussion of religious obligations, and whether the completed Sufi is able to dispense with them. It will therefore be necessary to analyse the terms al-Baghdādī employs in describing the Sufi journey in order to grasp how attraction to God is related to the requirement to fulfill obligations.

In the 8th and 9th chapters of the *Tuḥfa,* the possibility of breaking the law or neglecting acts of worship in any significant way is muted by the formalisation of the Sufi institution. Al-Baghdādī sees subversive beliefs and practices as problematic when they exist outside the Sufi institution, however to some extent heterodox beliefs and behaviours could be expressed within the institution where they were controlled by hierarchies. If heterodoxy occurred outside the bounds of the Sufi institution however, it may still have been tolerated and even considered a genuine spiritual experience, but an unaffiliated mystic was not allowed to claim spiritual authority, or to propagate a legitimate lineage.

Al-Baghdādī's codification of the shaykh-disciple relationship was therefore aimed to deal with the problematic social and theoretical elements of Sufism. Yet, it was necessary for al-Baghdādī to tread a fine line between maintaining the elitist notion of Sufi authority while also restricting antinomian behaviour. Hence, formalisation of Sufi behaviour attempts to refine what it means to be "complete." It also meant that dispensations from the law had to be institutionally sanctioned, diminishing the potential to subvert social and religious norms.

This is evident in al-Baghdādī's definition of attaining the end point, (*intihā')* and attraction, (*jadhb)* which accompanies it. The term attraction had signified moments of rapture in early Sufism, however it came to be associated with unconventional rapture and eccentric behaviour in around the 11th century.[461] For al-Baghdādī and 'Umar al-Suhrawardī, the term begins to acquire a more definite meaning. As mentioned, al-Baghdādī describes the Sufi who had attained *intihā'* as one who is no longer conscious of his own actions as God commands the Sufi's heart and body. This accompanied an exchange of acts of worship for effortless attraction in nearing the divine. At this point it is revealed to the Sufi that his acts of worship were not bringing him any closer to the divine, rather it was out of God's grace that one attained these states. Furthermore being conscious of one's own worship was a veil to God which indicated the rule of the spirit over the heart rather than God. This state of shaykh-hood is described by al-Baghdādī as attraction. In the *Tuḥfa,* attraction signifies a permanent state in which there is the possibility of infinite progression.

For al-Baghdādī, the term attraction is best understood as a counterpart to wayfaring, *sulūk,* as well as *sayr.* These terms describe different ways in which the Sufi progresses on his path to God. Wayfaring came to refer to a behavioural etiquette, while the terms *sayr,* or voyaging and *ṭayr,* or spiritual flight, became increasingly connected to visionary or meditative disciplines. Lewisohn for example has described the latter as a visionary voyage.[462] In any case, we can be certain that by the time the prolific Kubrawī writer 'Azīz al-Dīn al-Nasafī came to formulate his ideas, these terms had acquired distinct meanings which described particular disciplines within Sufism.[463]

[461] Dols, *Majnūn,* 388.

[462] Lewisohn, 'The Spiritual Journey', 365.

[463] Ridgeon, *Persian Metaphysics*, 20-22.

However, that these terms were beginning to acquire distinct meanings much earlier, in Kubrā and al-Baghdādī's time has not been significantly highlighted. Al-Baghdādī employs the term "spiritual flight" as referring to a state just below being "abducted" by God. The Sufi who nears completion is described as oscillating between these two states.[464] Spiritual flight is therefore placed above wayfaring which is an exoteric code of conduct, but below abduction which is synonymous with attraction.

Understanding the term "flight" in the *Tuḥfa* however is complicated by al-Baghdādī's metaphorical usage of the term. For example, al-Baghdādī refers to the disciple as an egg that must be tended to by a mother bird so that the chick can emerge from its shell and becomes receptive to "flight."[465] These descriptions remain rather general and do not provide us with a concrete characterisation. If we look to Kubrā, the term "flight" is overwhelmingly connected to visionary experiences.[466]

This connotation of flight with spiritual visions and ecstatic states are also reproduced in al-Baghdādī's work. This is not simply a hierarchical arrangement, there are certain psycho-spiritual goals in practising wayfaring and spiritual flight. In his 10th chapter, on audition, al-Baghdād argues that audition is essential for the removal of contraction (*qabḍ*) from the soul and imbuing it with feelings of expansion (*basṭ*). In this discussion he associates these terms with wayfaring and spiritual flight respectively stating:

> For the disciples, and the companions of striving and discipline, and the practitioners of seclusion and isolation are of varying ranks and conditions, they may taste the delicacy of expansion with which [God] awakens their hearts. And He removes from them the effects of discipline and the fatigue of striving. And it may be that he places them in contraction which, if allowed to persist, results in depression and discontentment,

[464] See section 4.1, 245-246.
[465] Al-Baghdādī, *Tuḥfat al-barara,* 10.
[466] Kubrā, *Fawā'iḥ*, 149.

> which we fear may grieve the disciple in seclusion and open his inner being to receptivity to Satan and the ego. And in both instances, the shaykh trains him according to his critical examination. For if he is in a state of expansion, wanting through audition, to make him feel longing and desire, and he beseeches through it, with the supplication of his protected heart, so that he is not tested by the frustrated prolongment of his heart and his spirit in [a state of] contraction. And with that, he exchanges his wayfaring with spiritual flight.[467]

Here al-Baghdādī associates asceticism and austerities with wayfaring, while expansiveness is associated with spiritual flight. Hence, wayfaring takes as its main concern the exoteric etiquette of behaviour, while flight is related to the psycho-spiritual experiences of the Sufi. Al-Baghdādī is not as clear on the distinction between the two terms as later writers, but we can certainly see an attempt to define these two terms in the *Tuḥfa* and can therefore posit that al-Baghdādī and Kubrā influenced the connotations that these terms were to acquire.

Al-Baghdādī's own student, Najm al-Dīn al-Rāzī, using the same imagery as his master, places flight above wayfaring, describing the novice who cannot "fly" as an "egg that has not reached bird-hood." Yet al-Rāzī also makes clear that "flight" is only possible with the guidance of a shaykh, and that, under the guidance of a shaykh "who resembles a bird," the disciple is able to cover "vast distances" more quickly.[468] He then relates a conversation with a Sufi named Shaykh Abū Bakr who, was drawn to God without a shaykh, and says that although he had passed "mighty obstacles" by virtue of "rapturous states," it took him 45 years to arrive at a particular station. al-Rāzī then states that he related this conversation to al-Baghdādī who comments:

[467] Al-Baghdādī, *Tuḥfat al-barara,* 48.
[468] Al-Rāzī, *Mirṣād,* 241.

> None ever recognises the true value of the shaykh, nor is able to repay the debt that he owes him. We have disciples who in two years fulfil all the requirements of wayfaring, from the beginning of the path to the end of Truth. And when they reach that station of which you speak, we cause them to pass beyond it in one or two days. Yet that venerable one, after forty five years of struggle and being drawn nigh to God, tarries there for two whole years and suffers so much pain.[469]

In this exchange between al-Rāzī and al-Baghdādī, flight as a more structured discipline with institutional significances. This is the essential point of the bird-egg metaphors employed by both al-Rāzī and al-Baghdādī. The contrast here between a naturally attracted non-affiliated Sufi and one who is trained by a shaykh is stark. While the non-affiliated Sufi came closer to God through rapture he was unable to progress from these spiritual experiences which overwhelmed him. This also indicates that al-Bagdhādī's more structured theory of visions and spiritual experiences was intended to guide the disciple through such obstacles.

The development of 'spiritual flight' as a distinct notion associated with the guidance of a shaykh through visionary and ecstatic experiences also devalues spontaneous ecstatic experiences, encapsulating what we have previously detailed as one of the main arguments of the *Tuḥfa*, namely that those who are naturally attracted to God do not qualify as shaykhs since they do not understand how to guide a person for whom such natural attraction is not experienced. Flight serves as a counterpart to this spontaneous series of mystical experiences, suggesting a more structured approach in dealing with visions and ecstatic states. One of the main aspects of flight then, is its effectiveness in moving the Sufi to completion more efficiently. This also highlights the relevance of al-Baghdādī's systematised oneirology for the stratification of the Sufi path.

[469] Al-Rāzī, *Mirṣād,* 241.

7. Attraction and reaching the final stages of the path

Given what we have presented here, it is important to note that al-Baghdādī's notion of attraction, as the end point of the Sufi journey is a significant development of the term from spontaneous attraction experienced by the un-affiliated Sufi. It does seem strange that al-Baghdādī chooses the word attraction, or *jadhb* to define the completed state of the Sufi. However, al-Baghdādī's descriptions of attraction differ markedly from earlier definitions of the term, since for al-Baghdādī, attraction and reaching the final point (*intihā'*) are intimately connected.

For his contemporary in Iraq, 'Umar al-Suhrawardī, *jadhb* retains more of its older meaning in that it is ideally a temporary state. Both al-Suhrawardī and al-Baghdādī develop the notion that the *muntahī* has before him limitless potential for progression. However, unlike al-Baghdādī who characterises completion as an infinite progression of travelling "within" God, for al-Suhrawardī the Sufi experiences *jadhb* and is meant to follow this with further acts of devotion (*mu'āmala).* This results in the attainment of a greater state which is then followed by a higher *jadhb* and again spurs the Sufi on to a higher act of devotion. Al-Suhrawardī therefore establishes an infinite series of *jadhb* and *mu'āmala* which results in a symbiotic relationship between the two which means that the Sufi is never able to completely abandon practice. For al-Suhrawardī, attaining a permanent state of *jadhb* is a trap which the Sufi should avoid falling into. Instead the Sufi ought to continually experience moments of attraction and overcome them through acts of devotion.[470]

By contrast al-Baghdādī's psychological progression is not characterised as a symbiotic relationship between experiencing attractions and performing acts of devotion, as the

[470] Salamah-Qudsi, 'The Everlasting Sufi', 333.

natural state of the shaykh comes to be defined as a constant state of attraction in which he desires to perform acts of worship. For al-Suhrawardī, this symbiotic relationship maintains the importance of ritual and worship. Since this framework is not available to al-Baghdādī, he sets forth a number of other arguments which stress the need for adherence to Islamic law and acts of devotion after *intihā'* has been reached. These arguments depend on al-Baghdādī redefining the meaning of obligation (*taklīf*) within a state of attraction.

Al-Baghdādī introduces the term attraction very early on in the text, in the first chapter of the *Tuḥfa.* Here, the term is contrasted to the wayfaring of the ego and the sailing of the heart which is described as a sea voyage in contrast to the land voyage of the beginner, as al-Baghdādī explains in a passage embellished with geographical imagery:

> And if he crosses the caverns of the ego and reaches the shores of the oceans of the heart, and at that point his etiquettes are exchanged and differ like the condition of he who travels in a perilous wilderness and the condition of he who crosses oceans and swims in the waters. For the etiquettes of swimming and knowledge of the details of sailing and ships oppose the etiquettes of crossing valleys (*thaghar*)... And just as there are for land mounts [horses and camels] stations and abodes which support the caravan... So does the wayfarer, in the caverns of the ego, have abodes and stations.[471]

And:

> There are no stations and abodes for seafaring vessels and ships, apart from when disaster and hurricanes take hold. And that is because [ships] do not require any nourishment or replenishing, but their nourishment is in the appropriate wind which strengthens it. Likewise is the state of the heart which does not have any stations or

[471] Al-Baghdādī, *Tuḥfat al-barara,* 2-3.

> abodes because it does not require bodily, animal food... But its nourishments are the breezes of the subtle attractions of The Real.[472]

He then explains that once the Sufi has accomplished the proper etiquette in this state, meaning the state of reaching the heart and beyond the ego, he is "transported by the divine attractions to the world of the innermost heart." Here, he is to adhere to a different set of behaviours which al-Baghdādī explains are intended to "turn him towards facing the presence of God (*ḥaḍrat al-rubūbiyya*) and the conditions incumbent upon the Sufi in this state are those of presence (*ḥuḍūr*) and witnessing [visions]."[473]

Finally al-Baghdādī reveals that these three modes of travel which each require certain behaviours correspond to the well-known hierarchical division of faith, *islām*, *īmān,* and *iḥsān.* Al-Baghdādī states that travelling through the wilderness of the ego requires the etiquettes of *islām*, while crossing the ocean of the heart requires *īmān.* Finally, being transported to the world spirits firstly, and secondly into the enclosure of the innermost heart and the presence of God's beauty and majesty, pertains to the etiquettes of *iḥsān.*[474]

Al-Baghdādī's aim here is the development of a distinct hierarchy regarding the stages of the path. Each station is connected to a particular method of behaviour and therefore attraction appears here not as a substitute for acts of worship, but a state which requires a new set of behaviours. This already positions al-Baghdādī to argue that the behavioural stipulations are necessary even at the end of the path. Furthermore the introduction of etiquettes or *ādāb* into the stationless progressions beyond the ego serves as an attempt to introduce etiquette into the higher levels of the path.

---

[472] Al-Baghdādī, *Tuḥfat al-barara,* 2-3.
[473] Al-Baghdādī, *Tuḥfat al-barara,* 2-3.
[474] Al-Baghdādī, *Tuḥfat al-barara,* 2-3.

The meaning of attraction develops further throughout the text. In the 3rd chapter when al-Baghdādī begins to detail the psychological theory which informs the *Tuḥfa,* he equates attraction with the manifestation of the divine attributes. Here he makes a direct parallel between "exchanging the attributes of the spirit for the attributes of God" with the "negation of *sayr",* which is related to "flight," and the exchange of *sayr* with attraction. At this point, "the kernel of attraction is freed from the shell of *sayr."*[475] He then goes on to describe the journey of attraction as infinite, stating:

> If *sayr* is exchanged for attraction, travelling occurs in the world of God's attributes, and [this travelling] has no end point.[476]

He also describes it as follows:

> If *sayr* in the world of humanness ends, and providence attracts him to the enclosures of honour, loving is exchanged for being loved.[477]

And:

> And in reaching the presence of God, we have made clear that, although it is the end of *sayr*, it is the beginning of the emergence of attraction. And travelling with attraction *within* God is without end.[478]

It is important to note the significance of these descriptions of attraction for wider Sufi thought. The peculiar phrase travelling *inside* God for example which is repeated in the *Tuḥfa,* is also prevalent in the works of the poet 'Aṭṭār and lends credence to the latter's

[475] Al-Baghdādī, *Tuḥfat al-barara,* 7.
[476] Al-Baghdādī, *Tuḥfat al-barara,* 8.
[477] Al-Baghdādī, *Tuḥfat al-barara,* 8.
[478] Al-Baghdādī, *Tuḥfat al-barara,* 15.

connections with Kubrawīs.[479] In addition, the description of attraction in terms of transitioning from being the lover to being beloved draws on Kubrā's descriptions of finality which we presented in our discussion of psychology.[480] Here, al-Baghdādī's definition of *intihā'* is in fact not accurately rendered completion, but moving beyond wayfaring and flight and indicates reaching the point of travelling within God and actualising His attributes. This is the beginning for the possibility of infinite progression:

> And travelling in God is without end, neither in this world nor in the next. And if the arrogant attracted one is pleased with his completion, and is in the service of a shaykh, then without a doubt the shaykh makes known to him his shortcomings and reveals to him his limitations, and he perceives his attractions with wayfaring until he solves his problem.[481]

This was important for the institutionalisation and centralisation of the shaykh's authority, since it defines shaykh-hood and keeps the highly advanced Sufi in need of a shaykh. Here, the advanced Sufi may remain in need of a shaykh despite actualising the attributes of God since it is an infinite process. Al-Baghdādī's notion of attraction is not free from the potential pitfalls of arrogance which accompany advanced states. Hence, the structure of the shaykh-disciple relationship remains firmly in place, etiquette continues to be observed, and the shaykh remains the primary authority of the community.

The argument which runs alongside this notion of completion is that the proper disposition of the perfected person would result in the seeker wanting to perform more acts of worship not less. In most of these discussions al-Baghdādī's answer to whether

[479] Landolt, 'Sufism and Ismailism', 10.
[480] See chapter 2.
[481] Al-Baghdādī, *Tuḥfat al-barara,* 13.

one is required to maintain *taklīf,* obligatory acts of worship, is to redefine obligatory acts in the context of the advanced Sufi as no longer being viewed as obligations. The term *taklīf,* connotes a strenuousness and difficulty in the performance of an action. Here al-Baghdādī claims that there is no *taklīf* in the advanced state. This does not mean that the Sufi is able to dispense from his obligations, but that the Sufi no longer perceives his obligations as obligations. This argument is very much dependent on the notion of completion and attraction which al-Baghdādī outlined for us.

In the 9th chapter of the *Tuḥfa,* al-Baghdādī discusses whether one is at liberty to dispense with obligations and worship once they have reached completion. Here, al-Baghdādī likens the ideal Sufi to a young man in love with a beautiful woman, arguing that for such a lover, austerities are not felt to be austerities at all as he would gladly endure hardships for the object of his love.[482] Here God is rendered the feminine while the Sufi takes on the role of a courter. Al-Baghdādī attempts to reinterpret the meaning of obligations (*taklīf*) so that it no longer connotes a burden, but something which one desires to perform. Hence, the proper *muntahī* should want to perform more acts of devotion not less. This was a matter of realisation attached to completion. Therefore worship and obligations are the same at all stages, but it is only that the initiate and intermediate do not perceive attraction behind their efforts to achieve completion:

> The reality of the attractions (*jadhbāt)* is that they are the pains of worship. If the person who is instructed to perform [an act] or abstain [from it], and is one of those who have realised that this life is but amusement and play… And when they are instructed with an order and have been blessed with an act of worship they are contented [with it].[483]

[482] Al-Baghdādī, *Tuḥfat al-barara,* 34.
[483] Al-Baghdādī, *Tuḥfat al-barara,* 34.

For al-Baghdādī then, attraction and completion are processes of realising the true nature of worship, by which acts of devotion come to be viewed by the Sufi as expressions of love and longing rather than obligations. Al-Baghdādī also sets attraction up as the counterpart to wayfaring in the description of completion which we presented in the previous chapter.[484] Al-Baghdādī also explains the different goals of the initiate:

> For the true protected wayfarer, as his standing with God increases, and as He brings him nearer to His presence, increases in his enthusiasm in acts of worship and his fondness for them. And this is one of the signs of acceptance, for the striving of the initiate is in cutting the connection to the ego and creation, and negating all thought impressions... And the striving of the *muntahī* is, when there comes a time where there is no scope for an angel to come near [and appear to him], nor a prophet [to appear in a vision], and he strains his efforts in acquiring the delight [in] the arrival [to God], and his spirit is absorbed in witnessing The [lights of] Beauty and Majesty, he is removed from monitoring time in accordance with this state and no creation distracts him... This is [the station of] the Prophet, peace be upon him, when this station commands his inner being and the dominion of Beauty manifests and [the Prophet] left creation... And he was absorbed in completion. It was said that Muḥammad desired his Lord and was made to love seclusion and devotion until God weaned him off suckling from His care and rejected him (*fashalahu*) by [ordering him to] mix with creation and call them to the Truth. And if you ascertain that cutting the human relationship with creation is a burden on the seeker, then how [do you consider] cutting the relationship of intimacy with the presence of God? [485]

Al-Baghdādī, after appealing to the example of the Prophet in arguing that one must view the return to society as the true tribulation, presents the reader with the example of Kubrā's shaykh, Rūzbihān al-Miṣrī rejecting a command which ordered him to leave

[484] See chapter 3.

[485] Al-Baghdādī, *Tuḥfat al-barara,* 34.

prayer which we have discussed above. Here, as in the previous passage, al-Baghdādī cleverly redefines the word obligation or *taklīf* as al-Miṣrī is made to say "oblige me with a different command" (*kallifnī bi-shay' ākhar).*[486] Indicating that the real obligation on al-Miṣrī was abandoning prayer. All this serves to redefine the meaning of asceticism for the *muntahī* who is no longer in need of ascetic practices. The disciple perceives obligations as hardships while the shaykh sees them as pleasurable. Therefore when one becomes a shaykh, performing acts of devotion is no longer defined as asceticism. This ensures the continuation of devotion, worship, adhering to the law and societal obligations upon completion.

The real *taklīf* for the advanced Sufi then is not in performing acts of worship but in abandoning seclusion and the presence of the divine and returning to wider society. This again attempts to redefine *taklīf* so that the true hardship becomes having to abandon austerities and worship. In this way al-Baghdādī diminishes the importance of the question as it is reduced to an issue of semantics and a notion that what is considered a hardship is relative. Technically, the idea that the Sufi is no longer required to perform austerities is not explicitly rejected, but it seems inconceivable that this could be interpreted as abandoning obligatory worship since al-Baghdādī had absolutely rejected abandoning prayer.

The effect of al-Baghdādī's argument is effective in limiting the scope of another form of antinomianism. The tendency for the advanced Sufis to begin to love and desire seclusion and spiritual experiences may also lead to subversive behaviour. By rendering the obligation of the completed shaykh as a return to society and service to community, the subversive behaviour of abandoning society is regulated and rendered a liminal state. We see the importance the shaykh-disciple bond here. Clearly, the institution is conceived of as a safeguard to antinomianism by holding the Sufi to a set of correct

[486] Al-Baghdādī, *Tuḥfat al-barara,* 34-35; See chapter 4 section 4.

etiquettes depending on psycho-spiritual rank, regulated by the shaykh's authority. While antinomian elements such as detachment from society and ecstatic behaviour remain a possibility, they are significantly restricted by al-Baghdādī's formalisation of the shaykh-disciple bond as well as his psychological theory.

The only instance where al-Baghdādī allows for a complete cessation of legal and ritual observance is in the case of insanity in the 8th chapter of the *Tuḥfa,* after asserting the need to adhere to the physical form of prayer. Here, al-Baghdādī very briefly gives us some insight into his views on holy fools (*'uqalā' al-majānīn*). Insanity was a complex idea in medieval Islamic society and it was not the case that the insane was always treated as a sort of saint, there were some conditions which the madman was required to fulfil.

As a general rule all insane people were exempted from ritual obligations.[487] Al-Baghdādī in this passage on madness discusses the case of Luqmān al-Dasanjardī after explaining that the Sufi must pass through a stage where he begins to love seclusion and monitoring his soul. Al-Baghdādī explains that at this point the Sufi experiences a weakening of his efforts in physical acts of worship due to his joy in the psycho-spiritual experiences of seclusion. Luqmān allowed himself to be overcome by this weakness and asked God to set him "free" from worship (*'ubūdīyya*). Al-Baghdādī then tells us:

> And so his reason was taken from him, which is a prerequisite for [maintaining] obligations, and since then he became one of the holy fools (*'uqalā' al-majānīn*). And this is not one of the levels of completion but is of the protection (*muḥāfaẓat*) of God. The teacher al-Qushayrī has said in the *Risāla* that one of the dervishes would be absorbed in his intense love, an absorption that would busy him from creation and distract him

[487] Dols, *Majnūn,* 445.

> from feeling [his condition]. And if the time of prayer came, he would return to normality and pray, [afterwards] he would then return to his absorption. And this is the completion of protection and the effect of providence… And in my experience, as the effects of acceptance of the wayfarer increases, so do his obligations.[488]

Al-Baghdādī uses the word 'protection' here to indicate a cessation in spiritual progress as opposed to progression. Hence the madman is one who was granted license to dispense with the law due to his insanity but is trapped in his incomplete condition. Mentioning that al-Dasanjardī would return to normality during prayer indicates an insanity which was not like a medical form of insanity. In some legal traditions for example, an insane man could not be divorced by his wife if his madness would cease during the hours of prayer. This seems to have qualified the madman for a type of holy insanity.[489] Al-Baghdādī therefore once again provides us with an example of being free to dispense with the law without actually breaking it.

Attitudes of reverence towards the insane, or holy fool are found in much earlier Sufi works. Al-Hujwīrī's for example argues against the notion that the only type of knowledge was intellectual since the insane and children were considered be capable of gnosis.[490] Al-Baghdādī's accommodation of insanity is therefore nothing new. However, his characterisation of the insane here attempts to clarify the relationship between this type of mystical experience and the Sufi institution. Barring the insane from progress and releasing them from legal requirements also disqualifies them from a place within the Sufi institution.

The holy fool is the antithesis of completion which is endless travel since he is trapped in a certain station. Al-Baghdādī stresses that the completed Sufi cannot cease

[488] Al-Baghdādī, *Tuḥfat al-barara,* 35.
[489] Dols, *Majnūn,* 444.
[490] Al-Hujwīrī, *Kashf al-Maḥjūb,* 268.

journeying and that attraction has no stops and stations. In order to continue on the infinite journey the Sufi is always required to adhere to certain behaviours and etiquettes. Hence, the one example where someone may legitimately become free from legal requirements and Sufi practice is held up against the ideal state of endless travel and adherence to the Sufi path.

Conclusion

Throughout this chapter we have attempted to disentangle the complex relationship between Sufism and antinomianism in al-Baghdādī's text. Antinomianism in this period is multifaceted, it is not easily definable as a distinct group of people or set of beliefs, and as previously stated, al-Baghdādī is keen to maintain some dispensations from the law in a limited form in order to bolster the elitist conception of the Sufi institution and limit the involvement of lay affiliates within it. This results in a tension whereby al-Baghdādī attempts to restrict dispensations from the law while granting the Sufi shaykh greater freedom with respect to the law in accordance to his understanding of the hidden law.

For al-Baghdādī, restricting antinomianism is intimately bound to the notion institutionalised Sufism. The necessity of the institution is stressed in al-Baghdādī's psychological theory and his prophetology which underpins notions of behaviour. Only by adherence to a shaykh is the Sufi able to transcend the ego and spirit and attain completion. This completion injects new meaning into the physical world as a manifestation of spiritual truths. In this way, even the more potentially radical elements of Kubrawī thought are employed by al-Baghdādī in service of a conservative attitude towards ritual obligations, stressing the need to adhere to the law while the soul remains attached to the body for instance.

These arguments, along with the tripartite division of the Sufi path establish a hierarchical institution. All of this depends very much on al-Baghdādī's conception of psychology. The antinomian for al-Baghdādī becomes synonymous with a lack of completion, the inability to manifest the attributes of God. And this lack of completion is presented as a consequence of being devoid of the guidance of a shaykh with a spiritual lineage. From what we have presented then, it seems that the assertions that the early Kubrawīs could not resolve the tension between their engagement in political affairs and their asceticism seems untenable.[491] The very same psychological theory al-Baghdādī systematises in order to discuss dreams, visions, and spiritual sensation is also employed to codify Sufi behaviour.

The result of al-Baghdādī's arguments is that the non-affiliated, untrained Sufi's authority is delegitimised. Yet the spiritual experiences of those rogue Sufis are not necessarily seen as disingenuous, intentionally misleading or the work of charlatans. In fact when al-Baghdādī describes Sufis who abandoned the obligatory prayer, something he absolutely disagrees with, he refers to them as "ignorant Sufis," which suggests that al-Baghdādī is not concerned with completely ejecting them from the fold of Sufism. Hence, there is no attempt here to identify a particular antinomian identity such as a Qalandar.

This attitude of tolerating some forms of subversion is indicative of a tension in al-Baghdādī's thought. Namely, that Sufism must retain some sense of authority above the law prima facie in order to maintain its social and political standing while also denouncing explicit transgressions of the law. This elitism is indicative of wider trends in Sufism in this period during which increasingly hierarchical structures were developed within Sufi communities. This accompanied ever closer ties to the political

[491] Deweese, 'The Eclipse', 79-80.

classes which made Sufis more susceptible to accusations that they had corrupted true piety.[492] In light of this, the emerging image of the Qalandarī was elevated to that of a genuine mystic who was clearly not part of the political and religious establishment.[493]

The rise of antinomianism can be seen as a response to the increasing institutionalisation of Sufism as evinced by figures such as ʻUmar al-Suhrawardī and al-Baghdādī. Hence, the *Tuḥfa* reveals an attempt to concentrate authority in the institutionalisaed Sufi community, which is likely to have contributed to the spread of antinomianism rather than its diminishment. Anitnomians now had to find expression outside the Sufi institution. Another challenge to Sufism which emerged after this period of increasing institutionalisation came from those who took issue with Sufism's claim to esoteric knowledge beyond the law. Ibn Taymiyya and Ibn al-Qayyim represented an attempt to divest Sufism from its claims to esoteric knowledge.[494]

In doing so the hierarchies of Sufism and the very basis of the institution, the authority of the shaykh is denied, and a far more egalitarian alternative to authority is posited in its place by focusing on the *sharīʻa* and rendering it accessible to all.[495] Both reactions are consistent with what we have detailed of al-Baghdādī's discussion of antinomianism. The restriction of dispensations to institutionally sanctioned divine insight, along with the elitist conception of the Sufi institution fits well with the objections both of legalists who were uncomfortable with Sufism's claims to hidden knowledge, as well as subversive mystical groups who were increasingly dissociated from Sufi institutions.

[492] Karamustafa, 'Antinomian Sufis', 114.
[493] De Brujin, *Persian Sufi Poetry*, 76.
[494] Anjum, 'Mystical authority', 82.
[495] Anjum, 'Mystical Authority', 87.

Chapter 5

Investiture and Clothing

An analysis of the discussion of dispensation and antinomianism found in the *Tuḥfa* would not be complete without turning our attention to the Sufi cloak (*khirqa*) and the practices of investiture which developed around it. In al-Baghdādī's discussion of the Sufi cloak, questions regarding the structure of the community and antinomianism intersect. Although al-Baghdādī's writings do not explicitly state it, investiture is closely related to the issue of dispensations (*rukhṣa*). 'Umar al-Suhrawardī allowed the investiture of lay-affiliates who could eschew Sufi practices and rituals, formalising their attachment to the Sufi institution without stipulating any obligations.

Discussions of dispensations then were not only relevant to the potential antinomianism which accompanied claims of completion, but also for amassing disciples and the spread of the institution, since joining the Sufi institutions without any obligations would allow it to attract affiliates more easily. The discussions concerning the cloak of investiture serve to distinguish betwen al-Baghdādī's Sufi community from other Sufi communities as he argues in opposition to notions and practices of investiture espoused by 'Umar al-Suhrawardī.

This chapter will first detail al-Baghdādī's conception of the Sufi cloak, examining its significance within the theoretical framework we have outlined, as well as in the account of its origins provided in the *Tuḥfa*. We will then turn to a comparison between al-Baghdādī and 'Umar al-Suhrawardī in order to highlight the emergence of self-consciously distinct Sufi communities in this period and the relevance of theoretical stratification to emergence of this distinct identity.

This will highlight an important point in this transitional period in the history of Sufism. The discussion of investiture in the *Tuḥfa* points to the emergence of self-consciously distinct Sufi communities, a significant indicator of the establishment of Sufi orders. This self-consciousness has not commonly been traced back to al-Baghdādī or the first generation of Kubrawīs. Hence, evidence of a communal identity in the text will oblige us to reassess the point when Sufis came to think of themselves as belonging to distinct Sufi communities in 12th and 13th centuries. This will allow us to posit the existence of a proto-Kubrawī community.

Like Sufi authors before him, al-Baghdādī attempts to explain the origins and significance of Sufi clothing practices. Al-Sulamī, al-Qushayrī and al-Hujwīrī had earlier sought to explain the origin, and the meaning of particular Sufi modes of dress, as well as traditions of investiture. In these earlier texts, the discussions surrounding dress are characterised by practical concerns. Al-Baghdādī's treatment of the topic differs markedly in its emphasis on the psycho-spiritual significance of clothing and its relationship to visionary theory and psycho-spiritual completion. The relationship between clothing and the visions of coloured lights reveals that clothing practices are tied to al-Baghdādī's systematisation of Kubrā's thought.

Much of this discussion is contained in the 7th chapter of the *Tuḥfa* which is dedicated to discussing the *khirqa* (the Sufi cloak or habit). In his own words, al-Baghdādī attempts to address in this chapter the questions of the origins of the *khirqa* and its transmission (*isnād),* its purpose, whether its significance has been exaggerated by Sufis, and when it should be bestowed upon the disciple.[496] The bulk of al-Baghdādī's discussion however is primarily concerned with the structure of the Sufi community. The topic of clothing

[496] Al-Baghdādī, *Tuḥfat al-barara,* 29.

is also discussed in the first few chapters of the *Tuḥfa* which detail the Sufi's appearance and its relation to visionary progress.[497]

Al-Baghdādī's discussion of "exaggeration" is also an attempt to reconcile the tension between Sufi thought and the emphasis on the material culture of institutionalised Sufism. This is a necessary point to tackle for al-Baghdādī's since it will be essential to defend and bolster the significance of the cloak to achieve his aims of structuring the affiliations of the Sufi community, by linking the institutional hierarchy with the theoretical basis of investiture. Hence, al-Baghdādī argues for the appropriateness of a greater emphasis on the material culture of Sufi dress which is essential for the formalisation of ranks and affiliations within the community. He achieves this by incorporating Sufi dress and investiture into his psychological framework.

Al-Baghdādī's views on the practical uses of clothing in Sufism are anchored in the same psychological framework which permeates the entirety of the *Tuḥfa.* The clothing practices al-Baghdādī expounds are not arbitrarily decided upon, rather they are portrayed as arising from the basis of psycho-spiritual concepts. By discussing investiture in the framework of his psychology, al-Baghdādī represents an important development in the institutionalisation of Sufism.

Through psychological theory, al-Baghdādī also attempts to maintain an exclusivist method of investiture in contrast to 'Umar al-Suhrawardī. This attempt to distiniguish the proto-Kubrawiyya from al-Suhrawardī's community is the clearest evidence of the emergence of a self-conscious identity in al-Bagdhādī's text. Hence, the chapter will conclude with a comparison of al-Baghdādī's and al-Suhrawardī's account of the cloak. Here, al-Baghdādī's important rebuttle of al-Suhrawardī's account of the origin of investiture will be analysed.

[497] Al-Baghdādī, *Tuḥfat al-barara,* 5.

1. Investiture among Kubrawīs

The sources that discuss investiture practices among early Kubrawīs during al-Baghdādī's time present us with a number of problems. Often it seems that Kubrawī shaykhs diverged from one another, differing in their practices and methods from investiture to seclusion and audition. Meier notes a large degree of flexibility in practice regarding clothing and other etiquettes among Kubrā's disciples. Al-Rāzī for example allows the use of the reed flute in audition ceremonies in violation of Kubrā's supposed disapproval of wind instruments.[498] It is therefore difficult to assert the extent to which al-Baghdādī was influenced by writings attributed to Kubrā regarding etiquette.

Kubrā mentions two different lineages for two types of cloaks in his letter to Lālā. The first is for a cloak of instruction, which bears the same chain of authority that al-Baghdādī mentions in the *Tuḥfa*. The second lineage mentioned by Kubrā is for a cloak of blessing which is derived from 'Ammār al-Bidlīsī and includes a number of prominent figures including Abū Najīb al-Suhrawardī, Aḥmad al-Ghazālī, and Junayd al-Baghdādī.[499] Al-Baghdādī's certification (*ijāza*) to 'Alī Lālā shows that he invested Lālā with a cloak of instruction upon completion.[500] The cloak of blessing and its chain of transmission are notably absent from the *Tuḥfa.* It will be shown that al-Baghdādī's silence on this lineage is intended to distinguish his community from that of 'Umar al-Suhrawardī's who shares this same lineage.

[498] Meier, 'A Book of Etiquette', 58; 59; 62.
[499] Kubrā, *khirqa Hazārmikhī,* 153, 163-164; See also *khirqa Hazārmikhī,* 153.
[500] Al-Baghdādī, *khirqa Hazārmikhī,* 165.

If we turn to the *Ādāb al-murīdīn,* a work attributed to Kubrā regarding Sufi etiquette and behaviour, we see an extremely detailed explanation of the symbolic meaning behind a number of Sufi garments. Whether this is in fact one of Kubrā's works however is uncertain. Meier states that Kubrā's chapter on dress emphasises the symbolic meaning of certain garments while paying little to no attention to their practical uses.[501] This would mark a dramatic shift from earlier Sufi discussions of clothing and investiture. In his analysis, Elias notes that despite the emphasis Kubrā placed on items of clothing in this work, the writings of Kubrā's disciples do not mention receiving any such intricate garments.[502] This suggests that Kubrā did not adhere to the rigid, hierarchical practice of investiture outlined in the *Ādāb* where each garment acts as a badge of progress for overcoming a very specific psycho-spiritual barrier on the path to God.

Furthermore, Elias has pointed out that one manuscript of the text identifies the author of the *Ādāb* as Khwaja 'Abd Allah Anṣārī, and posits that Kubrā's work is likely to have been added to, or that it was joined onto an Anṣārī work.[503] Both Elias and Meier have remarked that the section in the *Adāb* regarding clothing is disproportionately long in comparison to the other three sections of the work.[504] Unlike Elias, Meier argues that this was one of Kubrā's less thought-out, earlier works. However, given the highly intricate system of clothing in the *Ādāb* which is more likely to be a feature of later Sufi orders, and the fact that there is no evidence of its implementation among the earlier generation of Kubrawīs, this seems unlikely. If we accept Elias' theory of a treatise of Kubrā's joined onto one of Anṣārī's, it becomes difficult to say to what extent the ideas found in this text may have influenced al-Baghdādī. Yet there is enough evidence to posit that the *Tuḥfa* is likely to have preceded the *Ādāb.*

[501] Meier, 'A Book of Etiquette', 60.
[502] Elias, *The Sufi Robe,* 282.
[503] Elias, *The Sufi Robe,* 280; Meier, *A Book of Etiquette,* 56.
[504] Elias, *The Sufi Robe,* 280; Meier, *A Book of Etiquette,* 62.

There are similarities between the *Ādāb al-murīdīn* and the *Tuḥfa.* And it is likely that the *Ādāb* was influenced by the *Tuḥfa.* For example, the idea that the Sufi should wear the colours which reflect the rank of the soul is present here, though it does not seem related to visions and its progression of colours differs from the visionary progression of colours found in the *Tuḥfa* and Kubrā's *Fawā'iḥ.* Al-Baghdādī's discussion of clothing, is much more consistent with Kubrā's discussion of colours in the *Fawā'iḥ* than the scheme presented in the *Ādāb.* This strengthens the case for Elias' argument that the section on clothing in *Ādāb al-Murīdīn* portrays a later amendment of Kubrā's work. If we accept this account of the *Ādāb,* it seems likely that the idea of clothing as a representation of the Sufi's psycho-spiritual state and the visions he experiences would have its origins with al-Baghdādī's articulation in the *Tuḥfa.* Al-Baghdādī's work may very well be the earliest source we have which correlates the Sufi's psycho-spiritual rank and the colour of his clothing. In order to answer this question regarding the chronological placement of the *Ādāb* more fully, the cloak's relation to psychological theory and coloured visions in the *Tuḥfa* must be understood. From this it will be possible to argue that the *Ādāb* should be considered a later work which was probably influenced by the *Tuḥfa.*

2. Clothing as exteriorisation of psycho-spiritual states and visions

Al-Baghdādī conceives of the cloak and Sufi dress as expressive of the rank of the soul according to his Kubrawī psychological theory. Al-Baghdādī's explanation of the origins of the cloak also rests on arguments from prophetic tradition. Yet tellingly, his systematised theoretical framework of psychology informs his interpretation of these prophetic examples. Early on in the chapter, al-Baghdādī equates the cloak with

attributes, placing it within his theoretical framework as a physical manifestation of the condition of the soul:

> And when He [God] accorded him [the Prophet] with the perfection of cultivating this lofty state[505] in the hereafter and in this world, He invested (*khala'a*) him, upon his perfection with a clothing specific to his physical frame, and a clothing specific to his reality (*ḥaqīqa*). And for that reason, He has invested each of his parts with a clothing. For the clothing of his humanity is the *sharī'a,* and the clothing of his heart is the *ṭarīqa*, and the clothing of his innermost heart is reality (*ḥaqīqa),* and the clothing of his spirit is worship (*'ubūdiyya),* and the clothing of his reality is beloved-ness (*maḥbūbiyya)*, and the clothing of his form is the Sufi cloak. And just as the reality of the law is [composed of] the permissible and forbidden, which originate from [the prophet's] lofty state, likewise [there is] for human behaviours and natural etiquette, a reality which is the Sufi cloak, which has been chosen [and sanctified] by God.[506]

Here al-Baghdādī employs the term clothing not only to refer to the physical textile which one drapes around their person, but in reference to a much more significant concept of a bodily image which represents the spiritual reality of the soul. Al-Baghdādī's usage of the term clothing (*libās*) here in reference to the actualisation of the true nature of the faculties of the human soul renders the cloak synonymous with attributes (*ṣifāt)* which emerge in the soul and are manifested by the body. Thus, the attribute resulting from the perfection of each faculty of the soul is described as a *libās*. As previously discussed, the term *libās* also referred to the imagination which clothes God or spiritual truths in symbolic images.[507] Al-Baghdādī confirms that the cloak is a result of the spiritual completion in the following:

---

[505] Al-Baghdādī states just before this that the world (*dunya*) was created for the sake of the Prophet.

[506] Al-Baghdādī, *Tuḥfat al-barara,* 30.

[507] See chapter 2.

> And when the effects of the Real's (God) providence in the reality of the Prophet peace be upon him begins from the inner being, and then gradates to the manifest[...]. And the emergence of the light of prophecy into his manifest being (occurred) after forty years... first in servitude which is the clothing of his spirit, then in reality which is the clothing of his innermost heart, then in the path which is the clothing of his heart, then in law which is the clothing of his humanity... until the matter was done for him and he said: Today I have completed for you your religion.[508]

The cloak here reflects the soul's progress to perfection and is worn at the end of the process of perfection. This will be a significant notion since there was disagreement over whether the disciple should be invested with a cloak before completing his training. Furthermore, the microcosmic understanding of man is seen in al-Baghdādī's usage of the term "gradation" (*tadrīj),* which echoes the cosmogony of creation. Being invested with a cloak depends on the perfection of the soul which command the body, just as the materiality arises in the cosmos through a process of emanation of the divine essence onto the throne which sets into motion the process of creation. The cloak is rendered as a sense-able image of spiritual perfection, synthesising investiture with psycho-spiritual theories.

Turning to al-Baghdādī's discussion of clothing in the second chapter of the *Tuḥfa* which we have discussed regarding the progression of colours with this notion of *libās* in mind, we see that Sufi dress mirrors visionary colours and the progression of attributes. Here we see al-Baghdādī explains:

> It has been the custom of the seekers to wear clothes [coloured] with the colours of the lights of the visions which they see. And for each faculty of the faculties of the human being, if it has been sweetened with the sweetness of worship, has a light specific to it.

[508] Al-Baghdādī, *Tuḥfat al-barara,* 30.

> So, for the ego, there are lights according to its stations in worship, and the first of its lights is blue in colour, and that is because while the ego is still wilfully transgressive, [it is] a darkness [...]. And the blue [light] is created from the mixture of the light of remembrance... with the darkness of the ego, for blue is born from mixing black with white [...]. And if the ego is illuminated with the light of the heart... it becomes green.[509]

Al-Baghdādī then goes on to describe the causes of experiencing the various other colours of visionary experience in accordance with Kubrā's thought, though adding clarifications to what Kubrā had stated in his *Fawā'iḥ* in some instances, for example in his explanation that green is only the final veil of the ego and not the ultimate veil.[510] Eventually al-Baghdādī concludes his discussion of clothing with what we have detailed before, that the shaykhs wear white due to the vision of annihilation which is colourless, while disciples wear dark blue symbolising the visions in the station of the ego.[511]

Here, clothing reflects the stages of psycho-spiritual development that we have outlined in previous chapters in this study. As we have argued previously, al-Baghdādī's notion of attributes and visions were linked through the collapse of the perceptive and commanding functions of the soul into the heart. This is significant here since it allows a symbiosis between spiritual progress, visions and clothing. The initiates begin in a state where the ego is dominant, producing opaque starting with blue, in accordance with Kubrā's *Fawā'iḥ*.[512] The *Tuḥfa* is coherent with Kubrā's *Fawā'iḥ* in this regard, as it is informed by Kubrā's writings which also assert a symbiosis between visions and attributes.[513]

---

[509] Al-Baghdādī, *Tuḥfat al-barara,* 4.

[510] Al-Baghdādī, *Tuḥfat al-barara,* 4.

[511] Al-Baghdādī, *Tuḥfat al-barara,* 4-5.

[512] Kubrā, *Fawā'iḥ,* 125.

[513] Kubrā, *Fawā'iḥ,* 125-127; For a more detailed discussion of colours see chapter 2 section 2.iv.

Al-Baghdādī more or less repeats Kubrā's visionary progression here but adds his own discussion of certain colours the most important of which being white. As we have stated earlier, white is associated with completion whereby God commands the human body through the heart, and the seeker overcomes the duality of perception. Hence, al-Baghdādī develops Kubrā's teachings on colours further and uses this as the basis for his coloured hierarchy within the Sufi community.

In this scheme clothing attains more institutional significance under as visible representation of a Sufi's inner state, placing them in a ranked hierarchy. Hence, psychology in al-Baghdādī's text is not confined to the theoretical, imagined and visionary realms, but also informs the structure of the Sufi community. This hierarchy could very well have been put into practice, since al-Baghdādī allowed a incomplete Sufi aspirant to train those less advanced than him despite not having attained shaykh-hood.[514] If authority and teaching duty could be delegated to a shaykh's more advanced pupils, it seems likely that clearer markers institutional positions would be needed to maintain the central authority of the shaykh which may be marked out by the increased significance of green in al-Baghdādī's colour scheme.

This would also result in a clearer distinction of al-Baghdādī's Sufi community from others, as a specifically Kubrawī institution, with its own specific markers of identification and its own internal structure. As in other chapters of the *Tuḥfa,* al-Baghdādī attempts to maintain a consistency between Kubrawī theory and Sufi practice and it seems likely that the coloured hierarchies would be identifiable markers of Kubrawī Sufis since they may not necessarily be shared by other Sufis.

This analysis offers a new understanding of the *Ādāb al-murīdīn.* The *Tuḥfa* offers a much more detailed account of clothing than what we find in Kubrā's *Fawāi'ḥ* where the

[514] Al-Baghdādī, *Tuḥfat al-barara,* 15.

reasons for wearing the cloak are limited to making Sufis known in society so that they may be held to account and avoid laxity in their practices. This was a well known argument for wearing the cloak which features in al-Hujwīrī's *Kashf* much earlier.[515] However, it is also far less detailed than the *Ādāb.*

The difference between the *Fawā'iḥ* and the *Ād*āb could not be starker. The *Ādāb* provides us with an extremely intricate and detailed discussion of the meanings behind various colours as well as many Sufi items of clothing which are never mentioned in 12th and 13th century texts. Strangely, it neglects to couch the colour coding within the psychological framework al-Baghdādī adheres to, and also does not make a direct connection between colour and visions. Meier paraphrases the *Ādāb's* chapter on the colours of the *khirqa* in the following:

> If one has overcome the concupiscent soul (*nafs*), killed it... and now sits mourning the soul's demise, then one should wear black or dark blue. If one has repented of offering resistance to God... and cleared the page of one's heart of the inscription of foreign elements and the lust of the concupiscent soul, then one should wear white. If... one has traversed the sublunar world and entered the translunar realm... then one should wear (light) blue. If one has attained a share in all the mystical stations... then one should wear something multi-coloured. [516]

The text then goes on to discuss additional garments such as added trimmings, a hem or a collar, among others. The clothing system found in the *Adāb,* clearly is not exactly the same as al-Baghdādī's system of wearing what one perceives in their visions. Thus the reasoning behind wearing blue is restricted to that of mourning, while white does not appear to be associated with the concept of *fanā'* at all, and it seems that the multi-coloured cloak reflects the highest position here instead. Here garments signify

[515] Kubrā, *Fawā'iḥ* 243

[516] Meier, 'A Book of Etiquette', 69-70.

spiritual progression, but they are not representations of the soul as it is revealed in visions. The underlying theories in this section of the *Adāb* are either unknown to us or less reliant on a coherent theoretical framework than the system in the *Tuḥfa.*

Al-Baghdādī's reasoning accords better with Kubrā's work as well as previous Sufi sources. For example, the concept of inconstancy is literally termed 'colouring' (*talwīn),* and is commonly discussed in opposition to constancy (*tamkīn).* These terms are found in earlier Sufism as markers of completion and incompletion. They distinguish the incomplete Sufi, whose journey is characterised by change and advancement along the path, from the advanced Sufi whose psycho-spiritual rank is stable. Al-Qushayrī describes the difference between the two terms in his *Risāla*:

> As long as a man travels along the path, he experiences inconstancy, because he continues to rise and fall from one state to another and move from one condition to another; he leaves one place for another, but once he has arrived [at the presence of God], he becomes stable so that he does fall back into the conditions of the ego, for he is constant in his condition... And he who attains eradication... if he no longer takes account of his self, soul and senses... there is no constancy or inconstancy for him, and no station and no condition.[517]

Al-Baghdādī's according of a change of attire for the disciples, starting with blue, while reserving white clothing for the shaykhs draws on these well known descriptions of incompletion, constancy and annihilation. If we recall that for Kubrā and al-Baghdādī, the Sufi's coloured visions are essentially manifestations of God which are distorted by the soul, we see that al-Baghdādī's discussion of white clothing ties this Kubrawī concept with al-Qushayrī's statement that the sign of completion is that the Sufi no

[517] Al-Qushayrī, *al-Risālah,* 80.

longer takes account of his self.[518] Hence white signifies the absence of self-consciousness due to the absence of colour.

Therefore, if the section on clothing in the *Adāb* is to be placed after the *Tuḥfa* as we argue here, it seems that it must have drawn on al-Baghdādī's work or others which were influenced by him by associating different coloured garments with different spiritual ranks. Given that al-Baghdādī's discussion is far less extensive, and that neither Kubrā, al-Baghdādī, or any of the existing letters or works in the *Khirqa hazārimīkhī* make any mention of the items found in the *Adāb,* such as collars and hems, it seems more sensible to date this section of the *Adāb* at a later time when the Kubrawī community had developed into a more significant order with more detailed hierarchies where reference to such items would make sense.

Moving on from the *Ādāb,* we can learn more about what al-Baghdādī's work tells us regarding Sufism in this period. In the second chapter of the *Tuḥfa* al-Baghdādī lists two additional reasons for prescribing blue garments for the initiate. The first is that the initiate should wear blue garments to hide the effects of physical work which he is charged with during his training, so that the initiates will not be concerned with their appearance. The second is that blue was the colour of mourning and initiates should mourn over their sins.[519]

The notion of mourning over one's life before turning to Sufism which is presented in the *Adāb* and the *Tuḥfa*, was also common amongst earlier Sufis. Both of these reasons can be found discussed at some length in al-Hujwīrī's *Kashf al-Maḥjūb.*[520] The implication of listing these arguments alongside al-Baghdādī's own Kubrawī theory of colours here

[518] Izutsu, 'Theophanic Ego', 27-28.
[519] Al-Baghdādī, *Tuḥfat al-barara,* 4.
[520] Hujwīrī, *Kashf al-Maḥjūb,* 53.

is that it renders Kubrawī Sufism as consistent with the older traditions of Sufi theory and highlights that the conclusions of al-Baghdādī's psychology do not deviate from the existing corpus of Sufi practice, despite being based on a specific theory of colours.

Despite this accord in practice, al-Baghdādī has significantly built upon and diverged from earlier Sufi authors such as al-Hujwīrī and al-Qushayrī. Neither makes an attempt at crafting a hierarchy in their discussions of clothing, nor do they attempt to craft a symbiosis between it and psycho-spiritual states to the extent that al-Baghdādī does. Their explanations betray a Sufism which is less formalised than that of al-Baghdādī's. Al-Hujwīrī reasons for wearing blue is in order to bear dirt, not because of the work that the Sufi initiates performs in service to the lodge or the shaykh, but because of the amount of travelling they undertake.

This shift in reasoning is telling as it points to a more sedentary and communal life in contrast to earlier practices of wandering Sufis. This increasing emphasis on stability among Sufis in the 11th and 12th centuries was accompanied by less emphasis on travel, and a more established Sufi community with an increase in rules that restricted and regulated travel.[521] If we briefly turn to al-Baghdādī's short treatise, the *Risāla fī al-safar,* a meditation on the prophetic saying, "travel and improve your health" which is interpreted with the following:

> Physical journeying does not lead to bodily health, because when the nature and temperament get accustomed to a certain climate, changing the climate leads to illness... If you take a Turk to a hot climate, it will lead to his illness and death. The same is true of Indians who are taken to Turkistan. It is therefore clear that the saying... refers to the journey which is hoped to lead [those described in the Qur'an as] "there is a sickness in their hearts" to the health of intimate knowledge... Good health is the

[521] Salamah-Qudsi, 'Crossing the Desert', 145-146.

> domain of the heart, and profit in the domain of Lordship and the realm of [divine] absorption. [522]

This internalised notion of travel was in fact an important development in al-Baghdādī's work as it stratified the Sufi path into more distinct phases. This became a prominent theme in Sufism, finding expression in a number of works from Kubrā's *Fawā'iḥ* to 'Aṭṭār's poetry.[523] The shift to sedentary life is evident in the absence of al-Hujwīrī's argument here. Therefore, while al-Baghdādī does draw on the authoritative canon of previous Sufi works, his Sufism bears a different character. The incorporation of these earlier discussions legitimates his argument showing adherence to the Sufi canon while at the same time constructing a very different form of Sufism.

3. The cloak as a miracle

During his discussion of his chain of authority, al-Baghdādī pursues another line of argument which accords the cloak a status similar to that of miracles. This notion of the Sufi cloak and the blessings derived from it bears similarities to older Sufi discourses. Garments are discussed by a number of authors in the context of an older Sufi controversy. This was the practice of tearing one's clothes in moments of ecstasy (*wajd*) during the audition ceremony (*samā'*). This is discussed in al-Hujwīrī's *Kashf al-maḥjūb* where it is explained that the pieces of cloth torn in this way are distributed to the attendees, conferring blessings upon them.[524] Here, the spiritual power of the torn garments to bless those who it is given to is presumed. Al-Baghdādī discusses this transformative effect of the cloak in the context of investiture.

---

[522] Al-Baghdādī, *Risāla fī al-safar,* 310.

[523] Landolt, 'Sufism and Ismailism', 10-11.

[524] Ḥujwīrī, *Kashf al-Maḥjūb,* 418.

Just before detailing his chain of spiritual authority (*silsila*) from which the cloak descends, al-Baghdādī briefly explains the nature of miraculous events:

> And from the perspective of reality, because it is the tradition of God that nothing of the hidden things emerges in the manifest world without the medium of a perceptible (*'ayniyya*) form, out of His bounty towards his stewards (*awliyā'*)[525]

Al-Baghdādī then details a story whereby the Prophet miraculously milks a non-lactating goat, explaining that the Prophet extracted the milk through the medium of the goat even though God is able to create the milk without the need of an intermediary form or image.[526] Having established this, al-Baghdādī then goes on to describe the miraculous nature of Abū Hurayra's ability to memorise a vast number of Prophetic narrations as a result of the Prophet feeding him dates. Finally al-Baghdādī makes a comparison between Abū Hurayra and 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib, asking that if the former attained such a vast amount of knowledge in this way, how much greater would the knowledge of 'Alī be, since he was honoured with the *khirqa.*[527]

Al-Baghdādī's epistemology the consciousness which accompanies spiritual purity is prior to knowledge. If we recall our discussion of audition as it is presented in the *Tuḥfa,* we see that physical events may also represent spiritual realities. Thus, one could hear physical sounds with his ear and hear the speech of God with his spiritual sense of hearing. It seems that the *khirqa* functions in a similar manner to other physical experiences, as everything perceived by the physical senses functions as a medium for a spiritual reality in al-Baghdādī's thought.

[525] Al-Baghdādī, *Tuḥfat al-barara,* 31.
[526] Al-Baghdādī, *Tuḥfat al-barara,* 31.
[527] Al-Baghdādī, *Tuḥfat al-barara,* 32.

Al-Baghdādī maintains that the physical aspect of the miracle is only the medium by which the miracle takes place. The physical form of the *khirqa* here becomes almost accidental, a form or image for an immaterial event. Thus, likening the cloak to a miracle does not mean that the cloak itself confers the blessing or knowledge onto a disciple but only represents it in a physical form. Here the cloak becomes a representation for the transferal of knowledge and the purification of the soul. This occurs in another instances according to al-Baghdādī. In addition to the prophet feeding Abū Hurayra dates, al-Baghdādī explains that it also occurred through covering his family with his cloak, as he explains:

> See how the divine custom [that no hidden thing emerges in the manifest without a bodily intermediary] is attached to the removal of sins from [the prophet's family] and their purification, by the Prophet [peace be upon him] taking them under his cloak. And this is the reality of the cloak... God has made it a purifier for those who wear it and are honoured by it.[528]

The cloak for al-Baghdādī comes to embody this famous intensely intimate tradition of the purification of the Prophet's family. This tradition is not seen as the origin of the Sufi cloak by his contemporary 'Umar al-Suhrawardī. There is good reason for this, as it emphasises the exclusivity of investiture, restricting it to the most intimate people in the Prophet's life. Through his discussion, al-Baghdādī also crucially links his theoretical framework to this prophetic tradition. The notion of the cloak as an exteriorisation of the soul, as well as its intimate, exclusive origins, indicates a greater stress on the exclusivity of the cloak. Hence, these theoretical developments have important consequences for Sufism's societal and political role.

[528] Al-Baghdādī, *Tuḥfat al-barara,* 32.

4. The Sufi cloak and kingship

That clothing and investiture practices carried a social significance in Islamic society is reflected in al-Baghdādī's introduction to the 7th chapter of the *Tuḥfa.* Here he explains:

> For [God] has brought together in [man] all the particulars of this world and the hereafter, and the realities of the worlds of the hidden and manifest. And so people are (divided) into four levels. One level has acquired all the fortunes of this world and the realities of the hereafter, one level which has lost both this world and the next, one level which has reached the good blessings of the hereafter and have denied themselves the pleasures of this world, and another [level] which has done the opposite, enjoying the pleasures of this world and forbidding for themselves the happiness of the hereafter. And there is no doubt that the most perfect of these [groups] is the first.[529]

The highest group here is equated with the perfected Sufis who represent the prophet Muhammad in society. Hence, al-Baghdādī moves on from this to discuss the notion of kingship through prophetology by comparing Muhammad and Solomon, the latter of which has been portrayed in Islamic tradition as the greatest manifestation kingship, commanding both the hidden and manifest worlds. Here al-Baghdādī establishes that the prophet Muhammad is the greater manifestation of kingship despite the more obviously pronounced image of kingship which is traditionally ascribed to Solomon.[530] Al-Baghdādī's discussion of the *khirqa* therefore is clearly related to notions of society and leadership.

By the time al-Baghdādī wrote the *Tuḥfa,* Islamic society had come to develop an increasingly sophisticated culture of investiture. During the Abbasid period, garments had not only come to be indicative of class and profession, but also religious

[529] Al-Baghdādī, *Tuḥfat al-barara,* 29.
[530] Al-Baghdādī, *Tuḥfat al-barara,* 29-30.

communities, marking non-Muslims from Muslims for example.[531] A courtly culture of investiture was at least established in the early Abbasid era, as notable figures were honoured with robes and jewellery from at least the 8th century.[532] The custom also came to mark the formal acknowledgement of the caliphal heir, becoming an integral part of the ceremonial transferal of authority within the royal house.[533] The practice of investiture continued throughout the existence of the Abbasid caliphate up to the Mongol invasion of 656/1258, well into al-Baghdādī's time.[534]

Investiture ceremonies were not only limited to rulers however. The bestowal of robes and other garments as a means of acceptance, or as a sign of authorial legitimation became common amongst the developing institutions of the 12th and 13th centuries. By the 12th century, legal scholars and Sufis were associated with distinct styles of dress. In addition, the investiture practices of the *futuwwa* are likened to Sufi practices by Ibn Jawzi (d.1200).[535]

Investiture therefore seems to spread along with the collapse of Abbasid power, helping to establish new self-governing networks of overlapping loyalty. This is certainly the case regarding Sufism and the *futuwwa,* the two institutions upon which the Caliph al-Nāṣir relied to legitimate his rule. The increasing stratification within both of these institutions accompanies the fragmentation of political authority. Al-Nāṣir was initiated into a branch of the *futuwwa* and concentrated the power and authority of the group in himself.[536] Eventually, he ordered that all chivalrous groups disband save his own, ensuring that no rival claims to authority derived from the *futuwwa* tradition could undermine him.

---

[531] Stillman, *Arab Dress,* 51-52.
[532] Sourdel, 'Robes of Honour', 137, 138.
[533] Stillman, *Arab Dress,* 43.
[534] Sourdel, *Robes of Honour,* 143.
[535] Ridgeon, *Morals and Mysticism,* 12.
[536] Ohlander, *Sufism,* 271.

Why al-Nāṣir would resort to joining and becoming the leader of a *futuwwa* group cannot be fully understood without explaining the development of the tradition of *futuwwa* and its relationship to Sufism. By the time al-Nāṣir had ascended to the caliphate, an increasingly spiritual element had come to characterise *futuwwa* organisations.[537] Already by the 10th and 11th centuries, writers such as Abd al-Raḥmān al-Sulāmī and Abu'l Ḥasan al-Kharqānī had begun to assert that these chivalrous organisations and practices were essential to Sufism. Kharaqānī had even begun to use the term *Jawanmard* as a sublime rank of spiritual wayfaring.[538]

Furthermore these organisations had developed similarities to the emerging, increasingly institutionalised Sufi groups. Chivalrous groups had developed their own moral chains of authority stretching back to 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib, their own manuals on behaviour and training at the hands of a master who was termed the *jadd,* and their own items of clothing which signified one's status within the organisation. By 'Umar al-Suhrawārdī's time, they also seem to have become associated with the practice of musical audition and tended to wear woollen garments. 'Umar al-Suhrawardī asserted that the trousers of *futuwwa* were an essential part of the Sufi *khirqa* for example.[539] Hence, elements of chivalry were adopted into Sufism under al-Suhrawardī.[540] The three institutions of caliphate, Sufism and chivalry came to be associated with each other under al-Suhrawardī's tenure as *shaykh al-shuyūkh* as he stated that Sufism is a part of the caliphate and *futuwwa* is a part of Sufism.[541] The *futuwwa* organisation therefore was closely associated with Sufism and intersected with it in order to create and maintain social cohesion which cut across boundaries of class and could act as a counterbalance

[537] Ridgeon, *Morals and Mysticism,* 61.
[538] Ridgeon, *Morals and Mysticism,* 33; 45-46.
[539] Ridgeon, *Javanmardī,* 184.
[540] Ridgeon, *Javanmardī,* 191.
[541] Ohlander, *Sufism,* 280.

to ruling powers, offering a way for the marginalised to pursue their political interests.[542]

By the time the Buyids supplanted the Abbasids, the former were able to disengage from government and its moral burdens by relying on a society that was able to maintain duties and obligations, replace some of the previous functions of government, and survive continual political upheavals.[543] Thus the period leading up to the Mongol invasions saw a strengthening of these institutional bonds, so much so that the chivalrous and Sufi groups were able to survive the political fragmentation that took place with the Mongol conquests and the establishment of Ilkhanid rule.[544]

As we have discussed, the reign of the Khwarazmshah ʻAlā al-Dīn Muḥammad, was frought with infighting with the Queen Mother Turkan Khatūn. In such a climate, Sufism played an important role in maintaining a sense of communal cohesion and continuity but it would also have faced a number of problems in managing the political goals of patrons whose competing interests intersected and manifested in religious institutions. Such difficulties were clearly very real dangers if we recall al-Baghdādī's death at the hands of the Khwarazmshah 'Alā' al-Dīn due to his ever closer relationship with Turkan Khatūn.

Hence the reliance of ruling powers on religious and chivalrous institutions is undoubtedly more pronounced in the case of the caliph al-Nāṣir's relationship with 'Umar al-Surhawardī where there was more stability at court. Al-Suhrawardī who was sent on diplomatic missions by the caliph would invest regional governors and rulers with cloaks and incorporate them into his Sufi community which had become closely

[542] Ridgeon, *Morals and Mysticism,* 66-70; 78-85.
[543] Mottahdeh, *Loyalty and Leadership,* 39.
[544] Ohlander, 'Inner-Worldly Religiosity', 16.

associated to the caliphate. This is the clearest example of Sufism intertwining with secular rule.

We cannot be sure however to what extent the Kubrawī communities were intertwined with chivalrous institutions. Kubrā himself refers to the term *javanmardi* as a psycho-spiritual and ethical quality, and little information is given in the way of the practical role of a chivalric brotherhood.[545] Al-Baghdādī does not mention the term in the *Tuḥfa* but does so once in a letter to Lālā, stressing that the chivalric code would bar the Sufi from using money obtained from an endowment improperly. In addition, the figure of ʻAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib represents the archetypal chivalrous man, and the chain of authority of chivalrous groups extended back to him. Hence, al-Baghdādi's discussion of the origins of the Sufi cloak could also be evidence of an overlap between the institutions in Kubrawī circles. While this general attachment to a chivalric ideals seems to have been part of Kubrawī Sufi culture, we cannot say for certain that there was an institutional overlap like that of al-Suhrawardī adopting the trousers of chivalry into the Sufi uniform.

Perhaps this connection to chivalry is not stressed in al-Baghdādī's case due to the context of Iran and Khwarazm where chivalrous institutions were not sought by the ruling classes as a means of establishing their authority. The Khwarazmshah's had a large, powerful army and did not necessarily need to gain legitimacy as the caliph in Baghdād did, namely by maintaining patterns of loyalty through a number of institutions. For al-Baghdādī, relations with the ruling classes were strained, and institutional authority was a potential source of conflict as well as a source of legitimation. Anxiety over the correct relationship between Sufis and rulers can be seen in al-Baghdādī's discussions of black clothing for instance. In the second chapter of the *Tuḥfa* al-Baghdādī says that the Sufis should not wear black:

[545] Ridgeon, *Javanmardī,* 191.

> Because it is the banner of the Abbasid caliphs and the Qara-Khitai Turks, avoid it out of reverence for the holy offices and for abandoning likeness to unbelievers.[546]

The Khwarazmshah's were vassals of the Qara-Khitai, and it was chiefly they, as well as the Abbasids, who had the potential to undermine the Khwarazmshah's authority.[547] Both of these powers were distinguished by black clothing. Furthermore, this association of black turbans with secular authority seems to have survived well into the Mongol and Timurid period, as the much later Kubrawī biographical work, the *Rawḍat al-Jinān* of Ḥusayn al-Karbalā'ī al-Tabrīzī details an episode whereby the 14th century Kubrawī, Khoja Isḥāq Khuttalānī angered Timur by wearing a black turban in his presence.[548]

In the 15th century the Kubrawī order split into the Ẓahabiyya and the Nūrbakhshiyya.[549] The latter developed into a messianic movement which saw Sayyid Muḥammad Nūrbakhsh (d. 1464) claim to be the Mahdī. Upon his capture, Nūrbakhsh was ordered to desist from wearing black turbans.[550] It seems that al-Baghdādī's clothing colour scheme was not maintained by these much later Sufis who claimed authority from the Kubrawī chain of Sufi masters and were much more hostile to the rulers of their day. Bashir notes that al-Hamadānī, the effective founder of the Kubrawiyya order as a *ṭarīqa* rather than a community in the Mongol period,[551] had argued that Sufis should wear

[546] Al-Baghdādī, *Tuḥfat al-barara,* 4. Here, al-Baghdādī refers to "*al-atrāk al-qabābiyya*" which literally translates to mountain turks, this is likely to be a reference to the Qara-Khitai who wore black headdresses.
[547] Barthold, *Turkestan, 339.*
[548] Deweese, 'The Eclipse', 13.
[549] Bashir, *Messianic Hopes,* 53.
[550] Bashir, *Messianic Hopes,* 57.
[551] Deweese, 'Sayyid 'Alī Hamadānī', 140.

black since it signifies the unknowable qualities of God, while white should be left for the common people.[552]

Thus, we see in later Kubrawīs exclusivist and messianic claims which threaten secular rule, expressed through the adoption of black clothing. Although we cannot assume that the colour would cause the same tension between secular and Sufi authorities in al-Baghdādī's time, it is clear that al-Baghdādī was aware of the association and sought to avoid this potential source of hostility by choosing white instead of black to represent colourlessness. Interestingly, black was also the colour that 'Umar al-Suhrawardī chose for the shaykhs.[553] Al-Suhrawardī's close association with the Abbasid caliph is relevant here, since al-Baghdādī points to distinction from the Abbasids as an important feature Sufis should maintain, in this assertion he is perhaps also consciously distinguishing his Sufi community from others who enjoyed close relations with rulers. All this points to the increasing political and social significance of Sufi investiture, and its relevance for the identity of the Sufi order. The material culture of Sufism was clearly a versatile vehicle for the expression of identity and loyalty.

Mentioning the Qara-Khitay and the Abbasid caliphs together here is no coincidence and it seems that al-Baghdādī intends to navigate his volatile political climate by dissociating Sufi investiture from both of these groups and the historically revolutionary association of black garments. Hence, in contrast to his contemporary 'Umar al-Suhrawardī, al-Baghdādī is keen to avoid any association with secular authority by choosing white as the colour of the shaykh. This provides some explanation as to why colourless perfection is portrayed in white garments in al-Baghdādī's thought but is black in the case of his disciple Najm al-Dīn al-Rāzī who travelled to Anatolia and Iraq, met with al-Suhrawardī and had to attract patronage

[552] Bashir, *Messianic Hopes,* 58.

[553] Ohlander, *Sufism,* 213.

through his *Mirṣād al-ʻibād,* in which the ultimate colourless vision was black.[554] In Iran and Khwarazm the black colour could be construed as threatening, whereas in Iraq and Anatolia there was an increasingly interdependent relationship between Sufism and the caliphate.

Furthermore, traces of central Asian investiture practices are also seen in some of al-Baghdādī's writings. In one of the dreams al-Baghdādī interprets for Sharaf al-Dīn Balkhī, the dreamer sees al-Baghdādī in the company of an unnamed shaykh. After advising al-Baghdādī, the shaykh ties a white cloth around al-Baghdādī's waist and gives him an inscribed silver tablet.[555] The fact that al-Baghdādī does not interpret the meaning of this investiture in his analysis of the dream suggests that it would have been understood by the dreamer. During the periods of Saljuq and Mamluk rule, central Asian investiture practices spread and Turkic items of clothing became popular with the Muslim population.[556] Investing someone with a metal tablet could indicate the submission of the receiver, or could confer authority upon him, a practice which was common among the Qara-Khitai, the Mongols and other Turkic tribes.[557]

Whether such tablets were used in al-Baghdādī's own investiture practices is hard to say, however this illustrates that investiture was a prominent feature of the time, and that Sufis drew upon the prevailing cultures in their own investiture practices in order to bolster the centralisation of their authority. Practices of investiture were clearly powerful symbols and could occur in the hidden world of dreams and visions to legitimate Sufi authority. The association of the cloak with an institutional authority likened to kingship is therefore not surprising. The comparison is made even more explicit as al-Baghdādī explains:

---

[554] Al-Rāzī, *Mirṣād,* 302.

[555] Meier, 'An Exchange of Letters', 252.

[556] Stillman, *Arab Dress*, 68.

[557] Meier, 'An Exchange of Letters', 266.

> Know that the true King's of the hereafter, clothing their disciples who are under their authority with the *khirqa,* is like the practice of worldly kings. For it is the habit of worldly kings, that if a servant has tended to them for a time and has acquired great favour through good guidance, and when [Kings] see in him evidence of resourcefulness and uprightness, [they] confer unto him authority... [and they] honour him with a ceremonial robe (*khil'a*) which is witnessed by those who are near and far [to the king], and by the enemy and ally. And they realise through that, the completeness of the king's acceptance of his servant, as well as the servant's vice-regency.[558]

Al-Baghdādī's focus on investiture as a marker of loyalty to the king of the hereafter refers to the Sufi shaykh. That the investiture is meant to be witnessed by enemies and allies is important here since it asserts the cloak as a symbol of a specific identity and attachment to a specific shaykh. Moreover, the inclusion of the term "enemy" seems to suggest an attempt to fortify the Sufi community against interference. That al-Baghdādī begins his discussion of the Sufi cloak with a discussion of Kingship is therefore indicative of the socio-political importance of investiture.

Through al-Baghdādī's comparison of Solomon and the prophet Muhammad the notion of true kingship is redefined as the complete human being who has attained "the fortunes of the hereafter and the realities of this world." Al-Baghdādī then explains that those who are able to maintain a connection to the two worlds are the highest in rank because such a feat requires "strength" and supposedly a more perfect soul. The level below this is reserved for those who have realised their own weaknesses and have forbidden for themselves the enjoyment of the present world. This then leads al-Baghdādī to prove that the Prophet Muhammad was the prime example of perfection,

[558] Al-Baghdādī, *Tuḥfat al-barara,* 32.

adjoining (*jam'*) the present and the hereafter.[559] This leads al-Baghdādī to assert that the prophet Muhammad's perfection in comparison to the more ostentatious image of Solomon, stating that Kingship has a form and a reality and while Solomon had greater kingship in form, Muhammad had a greater kingship in reality. He also explains that:

> The Prophet and Solomon, peace be upon them, were of those who had adjoined this world and the next. However, the Prophet preferred his hereafter-ness over his worldly-ness.[560]

This argument seems to have become a well-known formulation as it appears in later Sufi works. Its inclusion here is telling since it tends to be employed in the context of tension between Sufism and secular rule. For example, the same argument emerges in Shams al-Dīn Aḥmad al-Aflākī's (d.1360) biographical work describing the tension between Bahā' al-Dīn Walad and the Khwarazmshah.[561] Despite John O'kane's assertion that Aflākī's account of Bahā' al-Dīn Walad's life is replete with errors,[562] it appears to have gained currency at least by Aflākī's time, and the trope clearly had potential to subvert and challenge political authority.

The implication here is that the Sufi shaykh has greater claims to authority in reality (*ḥaqīqa)* despite lacking authority in sensible forms (*ṣūra).* This reveals the mood of al-Baghdādī's Sufi community in a climate of fractious political leadership. Unlike 'Umar al-Suhrawardī who represents a complimentary relationship between Sufism and political rule, al-Baghdādī was careful to tread a finer line in appeasing rulers and service to wider society. His conception of the image and reality of the cloak are employed for the purpose of establishing a distinction between the identity of his own

[559] Al-Baghdādī, *Tuḥfat al-barara,* 29.
[560] Al-Baghdādī, *Tuḥfat al-barara,* 30.
[561] Al-Aflākī, *Manāqib al-'ārifīn, 11.*
[562] See O'Kane's introduction to *Manāqib al-'ārifīn*, 6.

Sufi community and ‘Umar al-Suhrawardī’s. This distinction carries with it significant implications regarding the relationship between Sufis and political rulers and reveals the extent to which distinct Sufi identities were forming in this period. This distinction between the proto-Kubrawīs and early Suhrawardiyya is directly relevant to the political realities these communities faced. In order to explore this fully, we must turn to a comparison between the two communities and their investiture practices.

5. Competing modes of investiture: Majd al-Dīn al-Baghdādī and ‘Umar al-Suhrawardī

Al-Baghdādī’s work represents the emergence of a self consciously distinct Sufi community and that this is paralleled by the development of notions of exclusivity and elitism which implies that the community surrounding al-Baghdādī and Kubrā were coming to think of themselves as the most appropriate path to psycho-spiritual completion. While we have outlined some of the evidence for this in al-Baghdādī’s attempts to centralise authority, and mark the various stages of the path, the tension and rivalry between his community and others is most explicit in the 7th chapter in the *Tuḥfa* regarding the origin and uses of the Sufi cloak or *khirqa.*

Here al-Baghdādī explicitly criticises the traditions which ‘Umar al-Suhrawardī relies upon in his account of the origin of the Sufi cloak. Though al-Baghdādī only mentions al-Suhrawardī once in this discussion, much of the chapter seems to criticise practices which were characteristic of al-Suhrawardī’s rules regarding investiture. It seems clear that much of the discussion in this section of the *Tuḥfa* attempts to undermine al-Suhrawardī’s methods of investiture, as well as dissociating the proto-Kubrawīs from al-Suhrawardī’s community. Al-Baghdādī clearly views al-Suhrwardī’s approach to investiture as incompatible with his theoretical framework.

In previous chapters we have shown how practice and theory were intimately bound in al-Baghdādī's thought, and how this informed the structures of the Sufi community and its place within wider society. Debates over the origin and practice of the *khirqa* therefore are related to the wider concerns surrounding Sufism, including affiliation with wider society and political rulers. Al-Baghdādī's systematisation of Kubrā's thought served to address a number of theoretical and practical problems. Al-Baghdādī's systematisation also attempts to distinguish his community from other Sufi communities.

A comparison between al-Baghdādī and 'Umar al-Suhrawardī will serve as the most striking example of al-Baghdādī's attempt to distinguish his Sufi community from others. This is evidence that Sufi institutions were not developing in isolation. Just as these particular Sufi communities were being shaped by the social and political realities of the 12th and 13th century, so did they exhibit theoretical frameworks and codes of practice in response to one another. This seems to have led to feelings of self-conscious differences between Sufi communities as witnessed in al-Baghdādī's work.

The emergence of self-conscious identities among competing Sufi institutions has usually been ascribed to a much later period in the history of Sufism which accompanied the rise of Sufi orders.[563] Acknowledging the emergence of a self-conscious communal identity in the case of al-Baghdādī is therefore important for our understanding of the development of Sufism. In the later period of *tarīqa* Sufism, the rivalry between Sufi groups intensifies as sharper criticisms of competing Sufi theories and practices emerge with the aim of attracting patronage and gaining social and political influence.[564] Our discussion is crucial as it reveals a degree of competition

[563] Deweese, 'Sayyid 'Alī Hamadānī', 139.

[564] See Deweese, 'Khojagānī'.

between al-Baghdādī and al-Suhrawardī which we may not have expected from "pre-*ṭarīqa*" Sufism.

By analysing al-Baghdādī's writings, and identifying instances which reveal a conscious attempt at dissociating his community from others, we see that even in this earlier period disagreements over correct theory and practice were coming to acquire a social and political significance. In this particular discussion, the argument encompasses the extent to which the Sufi community should extend its official affiliations beyond masters and disciples and among the wider populace. At the heart of this is a disagreement over the lax attitudes towards affiliation which were propagated under 'Umar al-Suhrawardī.

Discussions concerning dispensations in the *Tuḥfa* are inseparable from discussions surrounding affiliations to the Sufi institution. Being able to dispense with obligation was vital to the spread of the Sufi community through by incorporating lay-affiliates and even political rulers into it. Both the issues of laxity in affiliations and intimacy with rulers are exemplified by al-Suhrawardī. Therefore, it will be necessary to compare the two thinkers' attitudes towards relationships between Sufis and the ruling classes. This comparative analysis will focus mainly on al-Suhrawardī's major work, the *'Awārif al-ma'ārif*.

5.i. Competing narratives of investiture

It is important to note that both thinkers have much in common despite the differences which were forming between them and their communities. These commonalities may be rooted in their shared spiritual heritage, as both share a chain of spiritual authority through Abū Najīb al-Suhrawardī, the uncle of 'Umar al-Suhrawardī, and therefore

share a number of ideas and practices. In al-Baghdādī's case this lineage is not associated with a cloak of instruction, but with the cloak of blessing.

Despite this, al-Baghdādī is clearly attached to this heritage. When distinguishing his *dhikr* formula of *lā ilāha illā Allah* from the repetition of the word *Allah* on its own, he emphasises that the former was chosen by Abū al-Najīb and al-Hamadānī, while the latter was preferred by Abū Sa'īd and those who he describes as the "Turkic" shaykhs. He lists three reasons for choosing the former and among them is that it is more befitting to adhere to the teachings of "our shaykhs."[565] This is the same *dhikr* formula which 'Umar al-Suhrawardī insists upon. Hence, there are examples of practices which are shared between the two communities which may be traced to their shared heritage.

Yet, we should not take this as evidence that Abū al-Najīb's thought was necessarily strictly adhered to by al-Baghdādī or 'Umar al-Suhrawardī. 'Umar al-Suhrawardī for example seems to differ from his uncle when it comes to the subject of dispensation, *rukhṣa,* for lay affiliates.[566] Therefore while there are some similarities which might be traced back to Abū al-Najīb, other similarities are more difficult to account for. Salamah-Qudsi notes that both thinkers develop a notion of spiritual birth which occurs when the disciple is trained by the shaykh, and suggests that one may have influenced the other or that this may stretch back to Abū al-Najīb, but ultimately concedes that we cannot come to a clear conclusion regarding precedence, and the origins of this notion.[567] Hence, it may also be that both thinkers were developing similar notions independently. The notion of rebirth certainly gains currency amongst Sufis in this period as ideas of belonging and lineage become more important.[568]

[565] Al-Baghdādī, *Tuḥfat al-barara,* 22.
[566] Ohlander, *Sufism,* 247.
[567] Salamah-Qudsi, 'Institutionalised', 392.
[568] See chapter 3.

Yet while al-Baghdādī and al-Suhrawardī do share a number of concepts and practices, they are often employed to very differing ends. For example, in this particular example of rebirth al-Baghdādī develops the argument in order to assert a relationship of belonging between shaykh and disciple, in contrast to a relationship of education and training in the case of other shaykhs, and that this attempted to centralise the authority of the Sufi shaykh within his community. By contrast, al-Suhrawardī's discussion is less developed and ends after making the point that some are qualified to propagate a lineage and others are not.[569]

In this case al-Baghdādī's discussion of spiritual birth is not only more developed, it goes further than that of al-Suhrawardī's. It echoes the same idea of the fertility of some shaykhs and their ability to acquire disciples and the infertility of others, but adds another dimension of belonging throughout its discussion by distinguishing shaykhs of birth and training. The issue of precedence is not necessarily important for our purposes, rather we need only highlight that the two thinkers will draw on shared traditions which would have been familiar to them, and that they will develop and interpret these traditions in accordance with their notions of Sufi theory and practice.

One of the main differences between the two thinkers is seen most obviously in the style of their writings. As stated, for al-Baghdādī theory, practice and the structure of the Sufi community are intimately linked, so much so that it is sometimes impossible for him to discuss one without the other. This intimacy between theory and practice is discernable in al-Baghdādī's disciple, Najm al-Dīn al-Rāzī's work as well. While theory and practice are also linked in al-Suhrawardī's work, he tends to emphasise the practical and "apparent" aspects in his discussions. This contrast in approach is discernable even when comparing his work to al-Rāzī's, in discussions of the attributes

[569] Al-Suhrawardī, *'Awārif,* 85; 86.

of the shaykh for example.[570] In fact the focus on the practical aspects of Sufism in al-Suhrawardī's text seems to have rendered it more accessible, and this is highlighted as one reason for its popularity and influence.[571]

The intertwining of the discussions of practice with theory in the *Tuḥfa* itself accentuates the disparity between the two thinkers. When al-Baghdādī takes issue with al-Suhrawardī for basing his practices of investiture on a prophetic tradition he deems too weak, his criticism is not confined to the particular disagreement over the viability of the particular prophetic tradition, it also carries the weight of his psychological framework. This is seen clearly in the argument al-Baghdādī outlines:

> I have seen in the hand writing of the *imām* Shihāb al-Dīn Abī Ḥafṣ 'Umar bin Muḥammad al-Suhrawardī, and he is considered [an authority] on this topic, in what he wrote to one of his disciples whom he had invested with a cloak... And al-Suhrawardī, in his exposition of the tradition of investiture, relied upon the tradition of Umm Khālid bint Khālid... But by my life it is better and more appropriate to rely upon the lineage of the cloak according to what we have mentioned than [to rely upon] the tradition of Umm Khālid... And the consensus of the authoritative shaykhs agree on the wearing of the cloak and its veneration... and it is not suitable for them with their high status in religion to venerate something which they invented and for which they did not find a precedence for in the tradition of the prophet. And with respect to reality, for it is the tradition of God never to extract something from the hidden things into the manifest world without the intermediary of a [physical] image.[572]

This passage criticises two key principles which al-Suhrawardī relies upon in his discussion of the origins of the Sufi cloak. In the '*Awārif*, al-Suhrawardī argues that the tradition of investiture can be seen in the example of Umm Khālid but eventually

[570] See Rāzī, *Mirṣād,* 243-254.

[571] Salamah-Qudsi, 'Institutionalised', 398-399.

[572] Al-Baghdādī, *Tuḥfat al-barara,* 31.

concludes that "the wearing of the cloak in the way that the shaykhs do in this time [al-Suhrawardī's time], was not found in the time of the Prophet of God", and that it originates from the opinion (*istiḥsān*) of the shaykhs themselves. In other words, he conceives of it as something they had invented themselves.[573] After dealing with the problem of relying on the tradition of Umm Khālid, the second point is made more forcefully. This defence of the tradition of investiture as part of the prophetic tradition is obviously aimed at al-Suhrawardī's account of the cloak. Hence, in order to further augment his position al-Baghdādī ties the discussion to his concept of the cloak as a physical intermediary. This references the comparison between Abū Hurayra and 'Alī detailed above whereby the cloak acts as a physical intermediary for the transferral of knowledge from the Prophet to 'Alī.

While these explicit criticisms of al-Suhrawardī only appear in the 7th chapter of the *Tuḥfa*, they are nevertheless rather significant. In this passage al-Baghdādī undermines the entire basis of al-Suhrawardī's notion of the origins of the Sufi cloak, not only questioning his authority, but also calling into question his practices of affiliation and therefore the appropriateness of the structure of his Sufi community as well. By referring to psychology and cosmology in connection to the origins of investiture which begin with 'Alī, al-Baghdādī also implies that adherence to the Kubrawī theoretical framework as it is expressed in the *Tuḥfa* leads to more appropriate conclusions and practices, as it is not only adherence to the Prophetic tradition but the divine tradition of God who manifests hidden truths through bodily intermediaries.

Al-Suhrawardī distinguishes between two types of cloaks; one of discipleship (*khirqat al-irāda*) and one for anyone who wishes to be affiliated to the school termed the cloak of blessing (*khirqat al-tabarruk*), which was granted to the *mutashabbih,* literally meaning imitator but referring to lay-affiliates who accompanied Sufis and behaved like them

[573] Al-Suhrawardī, *'Awārif,* 97.

but were not officially initiated into its ranks. Al-Suhrawardī then explains that the former is given selectively, while the latter is given to anyone who desires it. And unlike the disciple, for the lay-affiliate there are no rules beyond adhering to Islamic law and keeping company with the Sufi community.[574] While this is not the ideal mode of affiliation, al-Suhrawardī suggests that after imitators receive a cloak they may be led to fully accept the Sufi path.[575]

Furthermore with his focus on detailing the positions of *khidma* (servants of the Sufis), *tashabbuh* (imitating Sufi customs) and *mutakhādim* (imitating the servants), al-Suhrawardī formalised a range of possible modes of affiliation with the Sufi institution. People were encouraged to become nominal servants to the lodge on the basis that this would be preparation for the possibility of their full initiation into discipleship though of course not everyone did so.[576] He therefore provided a number of routes through which one could aspire to positions within the Sufi institution.

This does not sit well with al-Baghdādī. His attribution of the origin of the cloak to ʻAlī and the Prophet's family already emphasises the exclusive nature of investiture. Al-Baghdādī however continues to warn of the dangers of leniency in investiture, stating:

> Some shaykhs have invested some of their disciples before their completion upon their exalted intuition that they should do so regarding the [disciple's] outer aspect, according to the [shaykh's] inner [perception]. For it is the tradition of God in training his servants, to start from the inner to the outer, so that the nurturing of the outer is the last of their concerns. And this is the way of the prophets and the purified, attracted of God's friends. Do you not see that the perfection of the *sharīʻa* is attached to the manifest world, as it occurred for the Prophet, peace be upon him, at the end of his life?

[574] Al-Suhrawardī, *ʻAwārif,* 99-101.
[575] Huda, *Striving,* 81.
[576] Salamah-Qudsi, 'The Idea of Tashabbuh', 192.

> According to the word of God, "today I have completed for you your religion." Or they may begin from the outer to the inner, and this is also accompanied by the nurturing of the inner as God has said, "The Bedouins said we believe, say you do not believe but say that you have surrendered (*aslamtū*)." For the adornment of Islam is prior to the adornment of belief in their regard, and this is the case for most Muslims. And according to this tradition, they invest them with a cloak prior to their completion.[577]

Here al-Baghdādī establishes a hierarchy between the two approaches of investiture. Those who receive the cloak only upon completion are of a higher class and are fit to become shaykhs and "friends of God" and to be equated with prophets, while those who receive cloaks before completion are not expected to achieve this elite status and do not achieve the same level of perfection. Al-Baghdādī then continues with a much more forceful tone. After repeating a well known tradition whereby Abū Muḥammad Ruwaym is rebuked by a girl for drinking water in the middle of the day, al-Baghdādī states:

> And this [cloak] is given to the mature shaykhs who are able to judge God's servants [in times of] joy and tribulations from what they have been granted from God of his light, and what he has revealed to their hearts from the wells of his knowledge. And for others, the likes of which have emerged in our time, they are devoted to wearing the cloak to assert shaykh-hood, and for love of fame, and are devoted to amassing disciples... And calling [people] to the truth without God's command [to do so] only nurtures lowly desires (*hawā*). And concerning the elevation (exclusivity) and lowliness (commonness) regarding the cloak, know that what is intended by the tradition of the elevated chain of authority is to reduce the possibility of deceit. Because as the number of men increases, so does the possibility of deceit. And what is intended by the cloak is an increase in the number of shaykhs in order to increase the lights of truth.[578]

[577] Al-Baghdādī, *Tuḥfat al-barara,* 32.
[578] Al-Baghdādī, *Tuḥfat al-barara,* 33.

Al-Baghdādī here turns his criticism upon those who seek to amass followers, fame and prestige. He argues that the cloak is not intended to create disciples out of the general populace who will never achieve the stations of God's friends and prophets, but rather to create shaykhs and to limit forgery and deceit by limiting the number of disciples. He continues this argument by repeating a tradition whereby one Sufi dreams of a path which is lit by torches and realises that these lights are the souls of the shaykhs and that the path is the Sufi way. Al-Baghdādī then explains that as the number of shaykhs between the disciple and the Prophet increases so do these lights, and the path becomes easier, more refined and perfected. He then explains that when a disciple is accepted by a shaykh, he is accepted by all the prophets and shaykhs which stand in that shaykh's chain of authority.[579]

Here al-Baghdādī may be attempting to offer an alternative to the notion of "ease" which accompanied the dispensations of receiving a cloak of blessing under al-Suhrawardī. This offered the opportunity of investiture and the status of affiliation to all members of society without any obligations. Al-Baghdādī argues here that ease is to be found by the further refinement and development of the path under qualified shaykhs which makes it quicker for the disciple to traverse.

Interestingly al-Baghdādī does not mention the cloak of blessing (*khirqat al-tabarruk*) at all, despite the existence of Kubrawī sources which refer to it. As we have stated, a letter from Kubrā to 'Alī Lālā testifies to the existence of this cloak. The chain of authority for this cloak also includes some important figures such as 'Ammār al-Bidlīsī, as well as Abū al-Najīb al-Suhrawardī and stretches back to Junayd al-Baghdādī.[580] Yet these figures are absent from al-Baghdādī's full account of his chain of spiritual authority in this 7th chapter:

[579] Al-Baghdādī, *Tuḥfat al-barara,* 33.

[580] Kubrā, *khirqa Hazārmīkhī,* 164.

> And the perfection of their (the companions of the prophet) manifest being, is that the Prophet honoured them with his *khirqa...* and he (the Prophet) clothed ʻAlī, God be pleased with him, and ʻAlī... clothed Ḥassan al-Baṣrī with it...[581]

The other chain of investiture which features in Kubrā's letter to Lālā conferring upon him the cloak of blessing, is only very briefly hinted at by al-Baghdādī. After recounting this entire chain of authority in the *Tuḥfa* al-Baghdādī simply states that most cloaks are traced to Junayd al-Baghdādī.[582] Lālā received cloaks from both al-Baghdādī and Kubrā which further confuses the matter since the two seemed to function as separate shaykhs in their own right despite the more senior position of Kubrā, however Lālā's certification which qualifies him for instruction comes from al-Baghdādī and not Kubrā.[583] Lālā also received a number of cloaks from non-Kubrawīs as well, however the attachment to al-Baghdādī may be evidence of his notion of the shaykh of birthright against the shaykhs of training being put into practice.[584]

There may be an important underlying reason for this omission in al-Baghdādī's text as it would dissociate his spiritual lineage from that of other Sufi communities including ʻUmar al-Suhrawardī who shares the same lineage as the Kubrawī's cloak of blessing.[585] The *Tuḥfa* gives the impression that there is only one type of cloak, and that it is the cloak of discipleship. This silence regarding the cloak of blessing is quite telling since al-

---

[581] The entire chain of authority al-Baghdādī details is: The Prophet – ʻAlī b. Abī Ṭālib –Kumayl ibn Ziyād and Ḥassan al-Baṣrī – (from Kumayl ibn Ziyad) ʻAbd al-Wāḥid ibn Ziyād – Abā Yaʻqūb al-Biyūshī – Abā Yaʻqūb al-Nahrajawzī – Abā ʻAbd-Allāh ibn ʻUthmān – Abā Yaʻqūb al-Ṭabarī – Abā al-Qāsim ibn Ramaḍān – Abā al-Qiyās ibn Idrīs – Dawūd ibn Muḥammad known as Khādim al-Fuqarā' – Muḥammad ibn Mānkīl – Ismāʻīl al-Baṣrī – Our shaykh Abā al-Janāb Aḥmad ibn ʻUmar al-Ṣufī (Najm al-Dīn Kubrā who bestowed it upon al-Baghdādī)
Al-Baghdādī, *Tuḥfat al-barara,* 30.

[582] Al-Baghdādī, *Tuḥfat al-barara,* 31.

[583] Al-Baghdādī, *khirqa Hazārmīkhī,* 165.

[584] Deweese, 'Two Narratives', 301.

[585] Ohlander, *Sufism,* 212.

Baghdādī avoids distinguishing between different types of investiture at all. This not only restricts types of investiture by leaving the cloak of blessing unacknowledged, it also distinguishes al-Baghdādī's lineage from 'Umar al-Suhrawardī's and renders it more exclusive since "most" other cloaks are derived from Junayd al-Baghdādī. Clearly, the lineage of Kubrā's cloak of blessing was made almost mundane through al-Suhrawardī's efforts. If we interpret al-Baghdādī's statement that increasing the number of affiliates increases the potential for deception in light of this, al-Baghdādī's discussion becomes a rather damning assessment of al-Suhrawardī's system of investiture.

5.ii. Competing modes of affiliation

Al-Baghdādī's tone is surprising given that this relaxed attitude towards lay affiliates was developing some time before 'Umar al-Suhrawardī. Al-Suhrawardī further relaxes rules of dispensation which were introduced by his uncle Abū al-Najīb al-Suhrawardī who avoids employing the term *mutashabbih* in a negative sense, and allows affiliates who receive the cloak of blessing to dispense with certain Sufi practices under certain conditions.[586] 'Umar al-Suhrawardī does not stipulate any conditions regarding investiture with the cloak of blessing but there is clearly a precedent in the practices of his uncle. Furthermore al-Baghdādī is to some extent in agreement with Abū al-Najīb and 'Umar al-Suhrawardī when he distinguishes those who are invested with a cloak of discipleship as part of the elite group of Sufis, from those who are invested with a cloak at the beginning of their training. 'Umar al-Suhrawardī places the lay-affiliate at the lowest rank in the hierarchy of the community, and conceives of it as a way to attract potential disciples.[587]

[586] Salamah-Qudsi, 'The Idea of Tashabbuh', 179.

[587] Al-Suhrawardī, *'Awārif,* 99-101.

Earlier Sufi literature indicates that shaykhs were always accompanied by informal affiliates who did not fully adhere to Sufi practices. However the tendency of previous thinkers was to argue that Sufis should remain exclusive. In this context, 'Umar al-Suhrawardī could be seen to be breaking with this earlier consensus more starkly than his uncle did.[588] In light of this, al-Baghdādī's criticism can be seen as a rebuke to an "innovation" and an appeal to return to the proper methods of investiture which were practiced by earlier Sufis. Hence, his attempt to define the nature of investiture through a prophetic tradition which privileges and preserves the exclusivity of the bond between the shaykh and his disciples in opposition to emerging practices of investiture which seemed too lenient. It is no coincidence that having concluded his discussion of colours, visions and clothing in the second chapter of the *Tuḥfa*, al-Baghdādī turns to the topic of mixing (*mukhālaṭa)* with the general populace stating:

> Cultivating the light of the inner being (*bāṭin*) is not assured without removal of the causes of darkness. And the greatest and strongest cause of darkness, is mixing with others and keeping company with those who do wrong and who have no intention of changing their inner beings... And if the seeker has secured himself and no longer fears this machination, then it is for him to wear anything [he wishes to wear]... And the fact is such that the disciple's states are changeable, so if he is within the training of a shaykh, it is not for him to decide anything.[589]

Al-Baghdādī here is conscious that clothing functions as a means to mark Sufis from non-Sufis and that a Sufi's interactions with wider society ought to be carefully considered. Yet, a high degree of flexibility is revealed here, clothing ultimately depends on the instruction of the shaykh and his assessment of the disciple's

[588] Salamah-Qudsi, 'The Idea of Tashabbuh', 180.

[589] Al-Baghdādī, *Tuḥfat al-barara,* 4-5.

requirements in training. For example, we have seen previously that al-Baghdādī was ordered by Kubrā to keep company with non-Sufis as a test during his discipleship.[590]

Al-Baghdādī lists other practices which mark out his school from wider society, prescribing shaving of the head and shortening the lengths of their clothes. These were practices were taken to extremes by antinomian groups who shaved off all their body hair and wore very little in rejection of social norms.[591] This is in contrast to trends in Sufism which were veering to a more lax form of affiliation without the need to distinguish oneself from wider society, chiefly seen in the works of 'Umar al-Suhrawardī.[592] This question is not at all entertained by al-Baghdādī who states quite plainly that one ought to remove themselves from the harmful effects of wider society at the beginning of the spiritual path.

Here we seem to be presented with the paradoxical case of a Sufi community increasing in importance both socially and politically, while expressing exclusivist and elitist notions. However, we should not assume because of this exclusivity that al-Baghdādī advocated the ideal of an insular Sufi community. Unfortunately we can not know for sure how al-Baghdādī's lodge was run on a day to day basis and to what extent non-affiliates were involved in the activities there, yet given what we have already discussed regarding his prominence among political and religious figures, the fame he garnered, and the wealth of his lodge, it is highly unlikely that al-Baghdādī's Sufi community was divorced from the wider community.

We have also seen that al-Baghdādī defined reintegrating into society and calling people to God as the obligation (*taklīf*) of the advanced Sufi which he must undertake to

[590] Al-Baghdādī, *Tuḥfat al-barara,* 4-5.
[591] Karamustafa, *God's Unruly Friends*, 19.
[592] Ohlander, *Sufism,* 212.

overcome the veils of the spirit. Furthermore al-Baghdādī's writings do indicate the presence of lay affiliates around the Sufi community, for example he praises the practice of audition for attracting people to the path, indicating that these concerts had a wider audience than the master and his disciples.[593] He therefore represents a Sufi institution which is heavily involved with wider society, stopping short of formalising the bond with lay affiliates through investiture.

A number of passages in the *Tuḥfa* highlight that al-Baghdādī was able to create structures within the Sufi community which could allow its spread without compromising the exclusivity of the shaykh-disciple bond. This was seen for example in al-Baghdādī's assertion that advanced disciples could train less advanced ones, or in the ritualisation of dreams and visions which allowed psychic communication between disciples and shaykhs over vast distances. These measures accommodate for the spread of the Sufi school and the increased propagation of committed disciples without formalising the bonds of those who accompany Sufis and partake in the more popular communal practices such as audition.

Furthermore, al-Baghdādī's certificate of instruction (*ijāzat irshād)* to 'Alī Lālā commands Lālā to travel and call people to God, quoting the Qur'an [9:122].[594] This gives us some insight into the way in which investiture was conferred among Kubrawīs and indicates that al-Baghdādī encouraged the spread of the community by encouraging his students to establish lodges elsewhere upon receiving their certifications of instruction. Of course, al-Baghdādī is not propagating an order to the extent that is seen in the case of 'Alī al-Hamadānī, but this is evidence of a gradual shift towards the widespread but centralised structure of orders.[595] We should therefore not read the exclusivity of

[593] Al-Baghdādī, *Tuḥfat al-barara,* 48.
[594] Al-Baghdādī, *khirqa Hazārmikhī,* 165.
[595] Deweese, 'Intercessory Claims', 208.

investiture in al-Baghdādī's writings as an attempt to seclude the Sufi institution from wider society. Rather, this exclusivity should be seen in the context of centralising the Sufi community in light of socio-political disruption.

In order to understand how investiture and clothing was connected to wider society, we must return to the question of dispensation, which was crucial for allowing the spread of the institution under al-Suhrwardī. In our discussion of antinomianism we argued that al-Baghdādī reinterpreted the notion of religious obligations or *taklīf,* so that it was not possible to remain a Sufi and dispense with acts of worship and Sufi practice. While this was one attempt to circumvent the potential for antinomianism within Sufism, it is also directly relevant to modes of affiliation. Al-Suhrawardī's relaxation of affiliations undermines this by sanctioning dispensations to a wide range of members. Al-Baghdādī's position on investiture is therefore consistent with other chapters of the *Tuḥfa* which only allow dispensation in the case of shaykh, binding dispensations to investiture which is restricted to the attainment of completion. Conceptions of investiture and dispensation also served to control affiliation to the community more generally. They are not detached from questions regarding the extent to which the Sufi community may affiliate with wider society and the ruling classes.

Al-Baghdādī's restriction of dispensation can be seen as an alternative to the type of investiture which suited al-Suhrawardī's political aims and ambitions. Al-Suhrawardī acted as an ambassador on behalf of the Caliph al-Nāṣir and during his travels he would initiate regional rulers into chivalrous groups, and also bestowed the cloak of blessing upon at least one regional ruler.[596] As the institutions of caliphate, Sufism and chivalry came ever closer under al-Suhrawardī and al-Nāṣir, these investitures were imbued with a political significance which established loyalty to the caliph through induction

[596] Ohlander, *Sufism,* 274-275; Salamah-Qudsi, 'The Idea of Tashabbuh', 185.

into al-Suhrawardī's Sufi community.[597] The relaxation of rules of affiliation then was an important step towards allowing the Sufi institution to pursue a more explicit political role in service of the caliph.

Al-Suhrawardī's role as an ambassador of the caliph, as well as his popularity among the ruling classes, seems to have attracted criticism from his contemporaries. After returning to Baghdad from his mission to the Ayubids with the wealth and gifts he accumulated there, he was forced to defend himself against accusations of corruptability by stating that he only accepted gifts in order to distribute them amongst the Sufis of Baghdad. His reputation then suffered in 605/1208 as he lost the directorship of his lodges as well as his position as a preacher before returning to favour in 611/1214.[598] al-Suhrawardī engagement with rulers then did earn him some critics and may have compromised his legitimacy for a brief period of time. Yet, we do not seem to have many written texts explicitly criticising al-Suhrawardī in this regard. Al-Baghdādī's writings are important here since they reveal the extent to which Sufis may have disapproved of al-Suhrawardī's investiture practices and argued for alternative modes of affiliation.

The 10th chapter of the *Tuḥfa* addresses the topic of affiliation with wider society and rulers as well as questions surrounding audition. However, it must be said that the bulk of the chapter is dedicated to a discussion of audition while only a few passages discuss the Sufi's relations to wider society. The chapter therefore provides us with very little detail regarding the extent to which the Sufi may keep company with Sultans and wider society. This in itself is an indication that al-Baghdādī intends to provide a somewhat ambiguous response to the question put to him regarding rulers, as he avoids giving a direct answer. However, drawing on what we know so far of al-Baghdādī's attitude

[597] Ohlander, *Sufism,* 280-281.

[598] Ohlander, *Sufism,* 97-98.

towards rulers and wider society, we may be able to arrive at some important conclusions. The tone of the chapter is set at the outset as al-Baghdādī phrases the question as:

> Does frequenting the doors of Sultans and mixing with the oppressive and cursed ones reduce one's spiritual rank? Or is it permissible for the [spiritually] mature to expand and relax [his practice] of keeping company with people, both elite and common, [in comparison with] the beginner and intermediate.[599]

The negative view of rulers is established immediately, restricting al-Baghdādī's framework from toleration of rulers at best and a complete rejection of accompanying them at worst. Al-Baghdādī then goes on to stress the harm that engaging with wider society can cause for the spiritual progress of disciples, and argues that they should seek the company of shaykhs instead. Here he makes the very forceful claim that "committing sins in defiance of the *sharīʿa,* which deserve punishment on the day of judgement, is for me, better than mixing with people in the case of the disciple."[600]

While this may seem a rather definite statement, it is important to note that al-Baghdādī only asserts this with regard to the initiate, and not the intermediate disciple. The discussion here, as in other chapters of the *Tuḥfa* established a hierarchy which determines the extent to which a member of the Sufi community may serve wider society. Soon after this statement he begins to detail exceptions to this notion, emphasising that a shaykh may order the disciple to serve and accompany rulers or wider society, in order to overcome certain psycho-spiritual barriers such as excessive

[599] Al-Baghdādī, *Tuḥfat al-barara,* 39.
[600] Al-Baghdādī, *Tuḥfat al-barara,* 40.

attachment to seclusion.[601] Furthermore, al-Baghdādī does make space for fuller involvement with wider society as he states:

> As God has said to his prophet… "Abandon them with a gracious abandonment." Meaning mix with them with respect to image and abandon them with respect to reality. And that is why the Prophet… said, "the believer who mixes with people and is patient with the harm [they do] is better than one who does not mix with people and is not patient with their harm. And if the disciple is within the shade of the authority of a shaykh and seeks protection with the cord of his training, then he is safe from the threat of these pitfalls. And [he must perform] whatever the shaykh requests him to perform. And the shaykhs devise tests which the alert disciple must undertake.[602]

Al-Baghdādī then recounts the time when Kubrā ordered him to keep company with an unnamed sultan as a test. The initial tone of the passage is therefore misleading if taken out of context. Even the disciple may be engaged with wider society, but he does so on the orders of the shaykh. Al-Baghdādī's aim therefore is not to ban the Sufi from engaging in wider society and cultivating relationships with ruling classes, but to control it and only authorise it through the institutional bond of shaykh and disciple. In fact, once al-Baghdādī begins to discuss the role of the more advanced Sufi in society, his tone seems to shift dramatically stating:

> And it has been confirmed, in the *ḥadīth,* that the Prophet peace be upon him said, "and God aids the servant as long as the servant aids his Muslim brother." Therefore if he aids the people by mixing with them, then God aids him. And God's aid is better for him than his struggles and worship. For the aid of God [comes from] the door of his attractions… and for that reason Abū Ḥusayn al-Nūrī preferred companionship over

[601] Al-Baghdādī, *Tuḥfat al-barara,* 40.
[602] Al-Baghdādī, *Tuḥfat al-barara,* 40.

> isolation and used to say, "beware of isolation, for isolation is [like] keeping company with Satan, and companionship is incumbent upon you."[603]

By following the argument in the text, a clear hierarchical approach to engagement with society emerges. The initiate is not to be allowed to mix with wider society unless his shaykh asks him to do so whereas the intermediate and advanced must do so. By no means then is the Sufi expected to withdraw from society permanently. In fact given that al-Baghdādī states that training should be completed in three years, it is unlikely that even disciples would be removed from society for very long.[604]

What is paramount for al-Baghdādī in this discussion is the need for a strong communal bond whilst working within wider society. This comes to the fore throughout the discussion as al-Baghdādī constantly reminds the reader that the Sufi must remain vigilant regarding his soul during his engagement with wider society, and if he is not yet complete he must have a shaykh in order not to regress in spiritual rank. Al-Baghdādī explains that this is a requirement for the "changeable" intermediate. Only the completed Sufi shaykh has no restrictions upon his interactions with wider society. He then goes on to recite the story of Abū Sa'īd's acceptance of seemingly illicit money which we have previously detailed.[605]

In our discussion of antinomianism we highlighted that this point in the text was the closest to which al-Baghdādī came to sanctioning some form of antinomianism within the Sufi institution. This exception to the otherwise staunch assertion of the impermissibility of breaking the *sharī'a* along with the entirety of the 10th chapter of the *Tuḥfa* is proof that al-Baghdādī aimed to commit his community to involvement with wider society and the ruling classes. In light of this, the negative view of society which

[603] Al-Baghdādī, *Tuḥfat al-barara,* 41.
[604] Al-Baghdādī, *Tuḥfat al-barara,* 32.
[605] Al-Baghdādī, *Tuḥfat al-barara,* 41.

defines its effects as inherently harmful and reinterprets a return to society and abandonment of seclusion for the advanced Sufi as an austerity is a necessary step in justifying engagement with wider society. If this negative view of society were not upheld, it would no longer be a test for the Sufi to maintain his spiritual progress, and could be considered an indulgence. This would make it more difficult for al-Baghdādī to argue for the reintegration of the Sufi into society. The main point of this discussion then is not to discourage the Sufi from engaging with society but to assert greater self control over the Sufi community's interactions with rulers and the general populace, centralising the involvement of its members with non-Sufis in the authority of the shaykh who decides when a disciple should serve a ruler as al-Baghdādī was commanded to do so by Kubrā.

The *Tuḥfa* shows that al-Baghdādī's Sufi community developed very differently from al-Suhrawardī's. The liberal approach to investiture under al-Suhrawardī opened the possibility of affiliation, and the attainment of a higher status to the entirety of society. These affiliates could also be drawn upon as servants of the lodge, allowing Sufis to devote themselves to ritual devotions and training while the practicalities of day-to-day life were taken care of.[606] This liberalisation also served the political function of incorporating rulers and governors into the community, and in doing so bound their loyalties to a network which was increasingly intertwined with the caliphate.

By contrast, al-Baghdādī's thought leaves little space for incorporating rulers and lay affiliates into an official bond with the Sufi institution due to his positions on dispensations and investiture. It was the ability to grant dispensations to lay-affiliates which allowed for the Sufi institution to expand under al-Suhrawardī, allowing people to maintain their societal bonds and belong to the Sufi community as well. The

[606] Salamah-Qudsi, 'The Idea of Tashabbuh', 197.

relevance of these topics to antinomianism in the *Tuḥfa* therefore cannot be fully divorced from concerns regarding affiliations and society.

Al-Baghdādī too makes a case for the expansion of the community, but this occurs more selectively, allowing advanced disciples to train initiates, or allowing long distance bonds to be maintained through visionary rituals. His insistence that the initiate ought to eschew companionship with non-Sufis then can exist alongside attending to societal obligations. This suits al-Baghdādī's assertion that the practice of investiture intended to quickly and effectively create shaykhs rather than amass disciples.

This may indeed have been successful. It is well known that later sources gave Kubrā the title of "sculptor of saints" due to the amount of notable Sufis who were seen to have owed their training to him.[607] Some of these figures such as Najm al-Dīn al-Rāzī owed the bulk of their training to al-Baghdādī, so it may have been that this system of a central shaykh who deferred the training of disciples to their advanced disciples put forward in the *Tuḥfa,* was part of a conscious effort by the early Kubrawīs to create shaykhs more effectively. In that case we need to ask why it seemed more useful for the early Kubrawīs to structure their community in such a way and why the structure of al-Suhrawardī's community seemed disagreeable.

Of course, it may be that al-Baghdādī believes that investiture should not be made a mundane affair for the purposes of affiliation, and that it should not be bestowed upon people in the hope to entice them to join the Sufi community more fully as disciples. This would explain his attempt to assert the theophanic and miraculous role of the cloak. He may also have been genuinely perturbed by al-Suhrawardī's assertion that investiture had no clear basis in the prophetic tradition. However, in addition to these objections based on very firmly held beliefs, al-Baghdādī's response also betrays that

[607] Algar, 'Kubrā', *Encyclopedia of Islam*, vol. 2.

Sufism in Iran and Central Asia did not benefit from developing as the early Suhrawardī community in Baghdad did.

Since we do not have much information regarding the running of the Sufi institutions in Iran and Khwarazm in this period. However, the development of Sufi institutions was paralleled by the institutionalisation of the *madrasa*.[608] It may therefore be helpful to look at the development of the madrasa and the challenges it encountered so that we may understand the primary issues religious institutions faced when dealing with competing political interests. It was in the interest of rulers to patronise and establish these institutions as endowments (*waqf*) in order to gain legitimacy, and this continued even into the early Mongol rule of Iran.[609] However, increased competition between patrons could encourage hostilities between religious communities and institutions.

As we have discussed, the emergence of institutions of learning reflected the need to develop alternative patterns of loyalty and leadership when faced with the breakdown of political power. Both the Sufi lodge and the madrasa seem to have emerged together in this context. Chamberlain notes in his investigation into the relationship between the madrasa and patricians in Damascus in the 12th, 13th and 14th centuries that the madrasa was a place where various powers intersected and competed for supremacy.[610]

A number of factors compounded the competition which was played out through the madrasa, these ranged from the vast numbers being set up to protect the interests and property of elite families and the inability to determine what qualified someone to a post at a madrasa, which seems to have had no relation to the qualifications and certificates (*ijāza*) they may have obtained. All this allowed fierce competition over

[608] Ephrat, *Spiritual Wayfarers,* 76.
[609] Lambton, 'Awqāf in Persia', 310.
[610] Chamberlain, *Knowledge and Social practice*, 106.

posts between Ayubid and Mamluk sultans who interfered in the affairs of the madrasa where posts became prizes of political struggles. The inability of legal scholars to define the requirements for positions of teaching other than reputation and prestige, led to a rise in imitators who were unqualified but would dress like '*ulamā'*, exaggerating the features of their clothing.[611]

Clearly the increased establishment of madrasas along with the inability of scholars to define the necessary qualifications for posts within the institution meant that scholars could not exert enough control over its structure, and their positions lacked stability as it was unlikely that one would last in his post for more than a few years.[612] Though the context of the madrasa in the Levant differs from the context of the two Sufi communities under consideration here, the relationship between certification and socio-political struggles highlights the importance of investiture practices in establishing a relationship between religious institutions, wider society and patrons. Bulliet's study of patronage in Nishapur in the 11th century also stresses the importance of defining a criteria for the certification of teachers and notes that certification was essentially the "collective will of the learned patricians."[613] Anxiety over the relationship between Sufis and rulers can also be seen the example of Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī, who was keen to detach the Sufi institution from what Karamustafa has described as the "sycophantic" and "corrosive" competition which plagued the establishment of madrasas in his day where politics "seeped directly into the scholastic enterprise."[614]

And as we have highlighted, evidence points to a volatile relationship between the ruling classes and religious institutions during the political breakdown and increased

[611] Chamberlain, *Knowledge and Social practice*, 88; 96; 98; 102-104.
[612] Chamberlain, *Knowledge and Social practice*, 88.
[613] Bulliet, *The Patricians*, 50.
[614] Karamustafa, 'The Ghazālī Brothers', 273.

competition during the reign of the Khwarazmshahs. This is seen in the production of hagiographical material which focus on Abū Sa'īd and his relationship with rulers and patrons. These represent the fact that Sufis at the time felt the need to articulate the ideal model of patronage which seems to have been lost.[615]

In a context of political instability, al-Baghdādī's strategy of centralisation along with exclusivising affiliation makes sense as it would fortify the institution against interference. The emphasis on producing shaykhs, along with the development of a clear qualification and definition of shaykh-hood as expressed through Sufi theory, as well as a hierarchical dress code, address all the areas which the example of madrasas in Damascus could not, limiting the potential for patricians to interfere and the scope for imitators to gain patronage without qualifications. By contrast the madrasas in Damascus at the time could not clearly define the qualification of scholars and affiliates to the institution, which allowed the propagation of a vast number of competing madrasas and instability within the institutions themselves.

The exclusivity and centralisation within al-Baghdādī's Sufism then is indicative of adaptation to new socio-political circumstances rather than a rejection of society. The realisation that interactions with wider society needed to be more carefully controlled is reflected in what we have presented in al-Baghdādī's work. Al-Suhrawardī was also part of a process of institutionalisation and centralisation, however unlike al-Baghdādī it suited him to adopt a laxer attitude towards affiliation. Al-Suhrawardī could also pursue this due to the relative political stability of Baghdad at the time in comparison to Iran and Khwarazm.

In this period the caliph al-Nāṣir expanded his power through calculated military expeditions and propaganda. During his reign, he was successful at managing, as

[615] Safi, *The Politics,* 138.

Ohlander puts it, "the overlapping locations of socio-religious authority."[616] The spread of the Sufi institution here was important for the formation of political and social bonds which reinforced the leadership of al-Suhrawardī and al-Nāṣir. Hence, al-Suhrawardī developed hierarchical structures and practices of investiture and certification in a context of political stability which did not require fortification against competing patrician interests.

This was also a matter of asserting a proto-Kubrawī identity against that of the emerging Suhrawardiyya. There seems to have been particular interest in al-Suhrawardī's ideas in Khurasan. One of his treatises is entitled "Answers to the questions of some of the religious scholars of Khurasan." In this work he addresses many of the same topics which the *Tuḥfa* also discusses.[617] Unfortunately, the identity of the questioners is unknown to us, however that al-Baghdādī did seem to have access to al-Suhrawardī's writings and responds to them directly indicates that, if he did not read the *'Awārif,* he might have had access to the *Ajwiba,* meaning that there was some correspondence between people in al-Baghdādī's community and those within 'Umar al-Suhrawardī's.

These questions were directly related to the construction of Sufi identities in the period. Salamah-Qudsi has argued that al-Suhrawardī's work reveals a self-conscious Sufism, and an attempt to form solidarity and belonging through a unique form of collective life.[618] Hence, this emerging communal identity which was predicated on practices which were distasteful to al-Baghdādī had to be dissociated from the proto-Kubrawī community. From what we have presented here, it is apparent that al-Baghdādī's musters a number of defining features of Kubrawī thought, from theories of

[616] Ohlander, *Sufism*, 20-21; 26-27.
[617] Ohlander, *Sufism*, 227.
[618] Salamah-Qudsi, 'The Idea of Tashabbuh', 196; 197.

visions, attributes, and microcosmology in order to distinguish the proto-Kubrawiyya from the nascent Suhrawardiyya.

This also raises the question of competition between al-Baghdādī and al-Suhrawardī's communities as the latter could spread more easily and was evidently very influential. It could very well be that al-Baghdādī felt that 'Umar al-Suhrawardī's articulation of Sufism presented a challenge to the Kubrawī way of life and its theoretical foundations. In response, al-Baghdādī sought to reassert the primacy of his community and a difference between those Sufis attached to himself and Kubrā and the emerging Suhrawardiyya at the time. In doing so, he crafts a proto-Kubrawī identity which relies on a coherence between the defining characteristics of Kubrawī thought and Sufi practice. Here, the visible markers of proto-Kubrawī identity such as the coloured hierarchy of positions within the institutions, and the status of the Sufi cloak of investiture as an intermediary between the hidden and manifest which signifies the perfected state of the soul distinguish the proto-Kubrawiyya from other Sufi communities, as well as marking a distinct spiritual lineage. Furthermore, these competing self-conscious identities, which distinguished one Sufi community from another, anticipate the rise of Sufi orders.

Conclusion

The importance of the Sufi cloak as a marker of identity is clear here. Attitudes towards investiture allow us to understand the changing dynamics between Sufis, political rulers and wider society. Questions regarding antinomianism, politics and society intersect in the subject of investiture in the *Tuḥfa*. Furthermore, the institutionalisation of Sufism which al-Baghdādī develops consciously differed from the institutionalisation of Sufism under al-Suhrawardī. The difference between the two communities is reinforced by the variance in theory and practice which al-Baghdādī cultivates

throughout his work. Here, theory crucially reinforces markers of identity which distinguish al-Baghdādī's community from the emerging Suhrawardī community.

While none of these disagreements are to the extent that we may expect from later *tarīqa* Sufis who were more forceful in their condemnation of competing Sufi institutions, this is a clear indication of the emergence of competition in a very nascent form. It reveals the gradual shift towards *tarīqa* Sufism in this period. Crucially this analysis has shown an important degree of self-consciousness in al-Baghdādī's thought, indicating that the emergence of competing communal identities along with a transition to centralised and exclusive modes of affiliation and belonging were defined in opposition to rival forms of Sufi affiliation.

Al-Baghdādī's theoretical framework proves to be extremely useful and versatile, able to address a number of issues while drawing on a central core of conceptual doctrines and discursive tools. Hence, the theoretical framework of the *Tuḥfa* played a central role in the institutionalisation of the Sufi community and its centralisation around the shaykh, and also served to address problems of antinomianism and wider societal affiliations. It was crucial for distinguishing his Sufi community from other emerging forms of Sufism at the time.

Conclusion

This study set out to analyse Majd al-Dīn al-Baghdādī's *Tuḥfat al-barara* with the aim of accounting for a crucial period in the history of Sufism when Sufi communities were transitioning into orders. We have shown that al-Baghdādī's work offers a wealth of information regarding this period in the history of Sufism. We have shown that al-Baghdādī offers a coherent system of Kubrawī psychological theory. This is significantfor furthering our understanding of Sufi thought and the development and transition of Sufism from communities and loose networks of affiliation to the institutions which came to be called orders. Kubrawī theory has been shown to be central to al-Baghdādī's attempts to stratify and centralise the Sufi community, which is crucial for the emergence of a distinct proto-Kubrawī Sufi identity the 12th and 13th centuries. All of this points to a system of thought which anticipates the rise of Sufi orders.

In the beginning of this study, we stated that the suitability of using the term proto-Kubrawī in describing al-Baghdādī's thought would only be fully realised after we had seen through our analysis to the end. This proto-Kubrawī identity is seen in the *Tuḥfa* through its exposition of a set of shared beliefs, practices, symbols and structures of authority, as well as a self-conscious awareness of a distinction between the early Kubrawīs and non-Kubrawīs. This study has detailed al-Baghdādī's account of the rules governing the Sufi master and his disciples, antinomianism, and investiture. And it has been shown that his particular articulation of ideas found in Kubrā's thought has been central to each discussion. This connection of theory and practice binds the theoretical, discrusive and institutional elements of Sufism and is one of the most prominent features of al-Baghdādī's work which itself does not attempt to distinguish between the theoretical and practical.

Al-Baghdādī consciously emphasised theory in order to argue for the superiority of his method over the practices of other Sufi communities in his discussion of investiture for example. From this, the image of a self-consciously distinct community emerges in the writings of al-Baghdādī, one whose practices and institutions, the vehicles by which this communal identity is maintained, are based on ideas which are characteristic of Kubrā's thought. Though al-Baghdādī may not have applied the term "Kubrawī" to himself, all the evidence presented here justifies the assertion that al-Baghdādī's work is representative of a proto-Kubrawī community. This term indicates the centrality of Kubrawī thought to the emergence of a communal Sufi identity in the *Tuḥfa*.

Answering this question of how best to describe al-Baghdādī and his work has been central to this project since it depends on reaching a number of conclusions which prove the centrality of Kubrawī theory for the emergence of a distinct communal identity. Throughout, we have shown that al-Baghdādī provides an important systematisation and stratification of Kubrā's work, and that this theoretical framework is intimately bound to changes in the nature of the Sufi community. From this we moved forward to establish that the interdependence of theory and practice in the *Tuḥfa* was employed to deal effectively with a number of concerns of the Sufi community.

The theoretical framework offered al-Baghdādī the conceptual tools which facilitated the centralisation of the Sufi community and the establishment of hierarchies within it. It also offered an effective means by which al-Baghdādī could tackle the problem of antinomianism. Crucially, it also provided the Sufi community a distinct identity which differentiated it from other emerging centralised Sufi institutions through dress and oneirology. More generally, al-Baghdādī's text is an important example of the role that Sufism played in shaping the realities of the day for the medieval Muslim, through its

reaction to political and societal changes. From dress to dream interpretation, the *Tuḥfa* shows the central role of Sufism in affecting the material culture of 12th and 13th century Muslim society.

Kubrā's thought has in past studies been presented as a purely abstract exposition of Sufi thought. While such studies have undoubtedly provided invaluable insight into Kubrā's ideas, there is a danger that this focus on theory in abstraction neglects its relevance to the context of the day, and because of this many important aspects of Kubrawī thought have been overlooked. This study has shown that supplementing our knowledge of Kubrawī thought with al-Baghdādī's *Tuḥfa* in order to place it within its specific context is necessary if we are to fully appreciate its significance. Al-Baghdādī's *Tuḥfa* is one of the clearest examples of the ways in which Kubrawī ideas offered practical solutions to some very real problems facing the Sufi community at the time. The framework it offered was not only useful in a reactionary sense as a response to changes, but also offered Kubrawī shaykhs a wealth of ideas on which they could draw in order to actively shape their communities and wider society.

Hence this study is not only important for our understanding of the period, figures and thought under consideration, but also for highlighting the need to approach the study of the Kubrawiyya and the development of early Kubrawī thought with its social, political and practical implications in mind. In the Kubrawī framework, the most seemingly personal experiences such as spiritual visions carry a number of significances beyond the soul which witnessed them. Early Kubrawī psychology was not only a theory which explained the truth of mental, spiritual and sensory experiences, it was also a framework through which Sufis structured their communities and interacted with the wider world.

The legacy of this systematisation of thought and practice which al-Baghdādī undertakes in the *Tuḥfa* has also not been adequately understood, nor has al-Baghdādī been credited for his influence over later authors. Al-Rāzī's *Mirṣād al-'ibād* owes much of its psychological exposition and underlying micro-cosmological framework to the *Tuḥfa*. It also borrows from and builds upon the *Tuḥfa* in a number of important ways, from spiritual birth, prophetology, the notion of travelling *within* God, spiritual flight, and a system of coloured visions. The popularity of the *Mirṣād* throughout the Islamic world means that al-Baghdādī's ideas were disseminated widely and influenced Sufism beyond Kubrawī circles, far away from Iran and Khwarazm.

This study also provides an important comparative example to other Sufi writers. One telling difference between al-Rāzī and al-Baghdādī for example, is the latters overly negative view of rulers compared to al-Rāzī's writings on kingship in the *Mirṣād* which are more similar to the mirror for princes genre, providing advice for good and effective rule. This makes sense given the circumstances al-Rāzī found himself in, having to look for patrons in Anatolia and Iraq while al-Baghdādī had to manage his relations with rulers who were in conflict with one another while the threat of violence loomed around him. This contrast only strengthens the case for serious study of the *Tuḥfa* in order to truly understand the history of Sufism in this period.

Al-Baghdādī's influence is evident in the works of Isfarā'inī and al-Simnānī as well. Like al-Rāzī, Isfarāinī's psychology draws heavily on the micro-cosmology of the *Tuḥfa.* His student al-Simnānī further develops the metaphor of the heart as a mirror, as well as expanding on al-Baghdādī's prophetology by positing that each faculty of the soul corresponds to a prophet, expanding the comparison of prophets to the rank of the soul from al-Baghdādī's three to seven.[619] For al-Baghdādī, Moses, Jesus and Muhammad signified the soul's progression from the ego, to the spirit and perfection, or from the

[619] Elias, *Throne Carrier,* 74-76.

initiate, to the intermediate and to the complete respectively.[620] Al-Simnānī expands this for a more detailed prophetology along with a more intricate distinction of stages along the Sufi path to completion, which indicate an even more structured and stratified Sufi institution. And given that ʻAlī al-Hamadānī, one of al-Simnānī's students is credited with establishing the Kubrawiyya as an order, it is likely that through al-Simnānī, al-Baghdādī's ideas contributed to the shape such institutions took.[621] Hence, the influence of al-Baghdādī's *Tuḥfa* was far reaching both in theory and praxis, having significant impact on the emergence of Kubrawī *ṭarīqa* Sufism.

Throughout our discussion of al-Baghdādī's psychology it has been shown that the reception of philosophical and theological ideas through al-Ghazālī provided al-Baghdādī with the conceptual tools to further develop Sufi thought and practice. This is evident in a number of notable examples which we have discussed. His reliance on notions of thought impressions and the nature of the soul for example allowed the development of remembrance rituals which focused on communication with the soul of the shaykh. His usage of the term realities (*ḥaqā'iq*), allowed him to construct a particular understanding of man as a microcosm. Crucially, his collapse of the functions of perception and the command of the body into the metaphor of the heart as a mirror served to create an important symbiosis between visions, attributes and the Sufi path. This is evinced in his understanding of realities both as part of the composition of the human being as well as perceptible intelligibles which are imprinted onto the soul. This attests to a hitherto under explored connection between Kubrawī and Ghazālian thought which is crucial in al-Baghdādī's systematisation of Kubrā's ideas.

He also drew on Avicenna through al-Ghazālī to construct his notions of the inner senses and the role of beauty and explain the connection between the physical senses,

[620] Elias, *Throne Carrier,* 84-85.

[621] Deweese, 'Sayyid 'Alī Hamadānī', 140.

spiritual senses and the soul to arrive at a theophanic conception of physical sensation. In addition, the *Tuḥfa* bears parallels to other figures such as ʻAmmār al-Biṭlīsī and Yaḥya al-Suhrawardī, raising the possibility of hitherto unexplored connections between these Sufi intellectual traditions. Al-Baghdādī's ideas therefore reveal a wealth of information regarding the reception and development of Sufi thought.

These advances in psychology were also crucial for the development of a coherent oneirology which is important in itself. Prior to Kubrā and al-Baghdādī most oneiric interpretations do not seem to have a coherent interpretive framework. While this coherence is present in Kubrā's work, it is quite difficult to understand without supplementing it with a reading of the *Tuḥfa* which maps images onto a micro-cosmological framework. Furthermore al-Baghdādī's notion of the heart allows dream perception to be equated with the attributes of the soul. Hence the dream's diagnostic value is understood in greater detail in the *Tuḥfa.*

Al-Baghdādī's oneirology also reveals an important advancement in dream science through the adoption of body-soul dualism. For al-Baghdādī, the soul was reserved from the descent of the body away from the presence of God. Its subsequent attachment to the body causes the soul to be inundated with the images and colours of dreams and visions from which it must free itself through purification and "voluntary" death. This allowed for a more coherently systematised oneirology based on a hierarchy of images which is determined by bodily complexity. In addition, a coherent oneiric system with body-soul dualism at its core was important for maintaining a sense of communal belonging and reinforcing the authority of the shaykh through the telepathic connection between him and his disciples. Hence, al-Baghdādī's work is extremely important for understanding the significance of the reception of body-soul dualism in Kubrawī Sufism, and its relevance for the development of Sufi sciences.

The relevance of psychological theory to changes in the Sufi community go beyond oneirology however. Hence, al-Baghdādī attempts to centralise the authority of the shaykh and craft a more detailed hierarchy of masters, advanced disciples and initiates, was dependent upon a well-developed understanding of the Sufi path. Maintaining the structure of this arrangement was also dependent upon the important notion of "Travelling in God" where the potential to manifest the attributes of God became infinite, asserting the Sufi's attachment to the shaykh even after completion. In his discussions of the role of the shaykh and disciple, al-Baghdādī also developed a number of influential concepts which had a role in the development of Sufi terms such as training (*tarbiya*) and (birthing) *wilāda* as well as companionship (*ṣuḥba*). His work is therefore indispensible for understanding the centralisation of the Sufi community.

Al-Baghdādī's discussion of antinomianism also contributes significantly to our understanding the rise of groups such as the Qalandariyya in this period and their relationship to Sufism. Here we saw that antinomianism was defined in opposition to institutionalised Sufism. In this framework dispensations from religious law became the sole prerogative of the Sufi shaykh and depended upon a notion of elitism. Al-Baghdādī was not terribly concerned with justifying even the most seemingly odd doctrines he held such as understanding the speech of God from physical sounds, the ability to translate birdsong, or the visions of coloured lights against accusations of heresy.

Al-Baghdādī mainly tackles the issue through institutionalisation, characterising antinomians as incomplete and unfit for official offices in the Sufi institution, drawing heavily on psychological theory. This elitism and restriction to access to official positions within the Sufi institution is likely to have played a part in the rise of subversive mystical expressions which previously had found more room for accommodation in Sufism. Furthermore, notions of dispensations from the law were not only relevant to subversive behaviour, but also governed modes of affiliation and

interactions between Sufis and the wider populace. Hence, we have shown here that in order to fully understand the significance of discussions surrounding antinomianism, we must account for its relevance to the wider concerns of the Sufi community.

In his most systematic defence of normative behaviour, al-Baghdādī stresses the theophanic role of the physical sensation and the interdependence between the body and soul. This is striking since theophany is commonly seen as a source of potential antinomianism, perhaps due to the prominence of controversies surrounding Ibn ‘Arabī’s thought. Theophany as it was articulated in a Kubrawī framework, sought to temper antinomianism. Hence, potentially problematic notions were employed by al-Baghdādī in an effort to uphold normative behaviour.

These ideas also contributed to the emergence of a self-conscious identity. This is most vivid in al-Baghdādī’s discussion of dress and investiture as he detailed an exclusivist approach, distinct from the leniency in investiture which was encouraged by ‘Umar al-Suhrawardī. In this example al-Baghdādī’s theories of psychology and prophetology were put to use in marking the distinction between his own Sufi community and other Sufi groups. Furthermore, this discussion was also implicitly tied to the topic of antinomianism as al-Suhrawardī’s more liberal approach to investiture required dispensations for those who received the cloak of blessing. We have therefore highlighted an important interconnection between psychological theory, the structure of the institution, antinomianism and investiture practices in the *Tuḥfa.* All these topics intersect to a remarkable degree in al-Baghdādī’s work, revealing the complexity of the Sufism of the day as the theoretical and institutional become evermore intrinsically linked.

In conclusion, the *Tuḥfa* offers us an important insight into the development of Sufism in this crucial period of history. Al-Baghdādī’s work reveals the rise of a distinct proto-

Kubrawī Sufism. He was clearly an important thinker in his own right, despite his relatively small written output, his thought echoes and reverberates in many other works, both during his time and well after his death. This study of Majd al-Dīn al-Baghdādī and his *Tuḥfa* has shed light on the development of Kubrawī Sufism, yet there is undoubtedly more work to be done. We hope that this study will be of use to any student of Sufism and the Kubrawiyya wishing to investigate the historical realities of this Sufi community, or desiring to navigate its vivid world of images and symbols, populated with birds and beasts and illuminated by burning flames and shining lights.

Bibliography

Al-Aflākī, Shams al-Dīn Aḥmad. *Manāqib a-'ārifīn.* Edited by John O'Kane. Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2002.

Al-'Aṭṭār, Farid al-Din. *Tadhkirat al-awliyā'.* Translated by Arthur J. Arberry. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1966.

Al-'Awfī, Muḥammad Sadīd al-Dīn. *Lubāb al-albāb,* Volumes 1-2. Edited by Edward G. Browne. Leiden: Brill, 1903.

Al-'Awfī, Muḥammad Sadīd al-Dīn. *Jawāmi' al-ḥikāyāt wa lawāmi' al-ruwāyāt,* vol. 4. Amir Banu Musaffa and Mazahir Musaffa. Tehran Bunyād-i Farhang-I Iran, 1973.

Al-'Irāqī, Fakhr al-Dīn Ibrāhīm. *'Ushshāq-nāma.* Translated by Arthur J. Arberry. London: Islamic Research Association, 1939.

Al-Baghdādī, Majd al-Dīn. *Khirqa Hazārmīkhī.* Edited by Danishpazuh. In *Collected Papers on Islamic Philosophy and Mysticism.* Edited by Mehdi Mohaghegh and Hermann Landolt. Tehran: Tehran University Press, 1971.

Al-Baghdādī, Majd al-Dīn. *Risālat shaykh Sharaf al-Dīn al-Balkhī ilā Majd al-Dīn al-Baghdādī.* Edited by Fritz Meier in 'An Exchange of Letters between Sharaf al-Dīn al-Balkhī and Majd al-Dīn al-Baghdādī'. In *Essays on Islamic Piety and Mysticism.* Edited by Ulrich Haarmann and Wadad Kadi. Translated by John O'Kane. Leiden and Boston: Brill, 1999.

Al-Baghdādī, Majd al-Dīn. *Risālāh fī al-safar.* Translated by Fatemeh Keshavarz. In *Windows on the House of Islam.* Edited by John Renard. Berkeley and London: University of California Press, 1998.

Al-Baghdādī, Majd al-Dīn. *Tuḥfat al-barara.* Ms Istanbul Karacelebizade 353, 2a-77a. Transcribed by Eyad Abuali.

Al-Baghdādī, Majd al-Dīn. *Tuḥfat al-barara.* Ms Tehran Sepahsalar 598(2).

Al-Baqlī, Rūzbihān. *The Unveiling of Secrets Kashf al-asrār: The Visionary Autobiography of Rūzbihān al-Baqlī (1128-1209).* Edited by Firoozeh Papan-Matin. Leiden: Brill, 2006.

Al-Bidlīsī, 'Ammār. *Bahjat al-ṭā'ifa wa-ṣawm al-qalb.* Edited by Edward Badeen. Stuttgart: Steiner, 1999.

Al-Ghazālī, Abū Ḥāmid. *Iḥyā' 'Ulūm al-dīn: Vol 1-5.* Edited by ʻAbd al-Qādir ibn Shaykh ʻAydarūs. Jeddah: Dār al-Minhāj, 2011.

Al-Ghazālī, Abū Ḥāmid. *Mishkāt al-anwār.* Edited by Abū al-ʻAlā' al-ʻAfīfī. Cairo: Dār al-Qawmiyya li-l-Ṭibāʻa wa al-Nashr, 1964.

Al-Ghazālī, Abū Ḥāmid. *Tahāfut al-falāsifa.* Edited by Suleyman Dunia. Cairo: Dār al-Maʻārif, 1966.

Al-Ḥamawī, Yāqūt ʻAbd Allāh. *Muʻjam al-buldān,* Volume 2. Edited by T. W. J. Juynboll. Leiden: Brill, 1850.

Al-Hujwīrī. *Kashf al-maḥjūb.* Translated by Data Ganj Bakhsh. London: Brill, 1911.

Al-Jāmī, ʻAbd al-Raḥmān. *Nafahāt al-uns.* Tehran: Kitabfurushi-i Saadi, 1918.

Al-Juwaynī, ʻAlā' al-Dīn ʻAta-Mālik. *Tā'rīkh-ī-jahāngusha.* Translated by John A. Boyle. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1958.

Al-Karbalā'ī, Ḥusayn al-Tabrīzī. *Rawḍāt al-jinān wa-jannāt al-jinān,* Volumes 1-2. Edited by Jaʻfar Sultan al-Qurra'i. Tehran: Bungāh-I Tarjumah va Nashr-ī Kitāb, 1965.

Al-Mayḥānī, Muḥammad Ibn al-Munawwar. *Asrār al-Tawḥīd.* Translated by John O'Kane. Costa Mesa, Calif.: Mazda and Bibiotheca Persica, 1992.

Al-Mustawfī al-Qazwīnī, Ḥamd Allāh. *Ta'rīkh-ī-Guzīda,* Volume 2. Edited by Edward G. Browne. London: Luzac, 1910.

Al-Qushayrī, Abū al-Qāsim. *Al-risālah al-qushayriyya fī 'ilm al-taṣawwuf.* Edited by Maʻrūf Musṭafa Zarīq. Beirut: Al-Maktabah al-ʻAṣriyya, 2001.

Al-Rāzī, Najm al-Dīn. *Mirṣād al-'ibād min al-mabda' ilā al-maʻād.* Edited by Muhammad Amin Riyahi. Tehran: Intishārāt Tūs, 1991.

Al-Rāzī, Najm al-Dīn. *Mirṣād al-'ibād min al-mabda' ilā al-maʻād.* Translated by Hamid Algar. Delmar, New York: Caravan, 1982.

Al-Samʻānī, Abī Saʻd ʻAbd al-Kareem. *Kitāb al-ansāb,* Volume 5. Edited by al-Shaykh ʻAbd al-Rahman ibn Yaḥya al-Muʻallimī al-Yamānī. Hyderabad: Da'irat al-Maʻārif Osmania, 1966.

Al-Suhrawardī, Abū Ḥafṣ ibn ʻUmar. *ʻAwārif al-maʻārif.* Beirut: Dār al-Kitab, 1983.

Al-Suhrawardī, Yaḥya ibn Ḥabash. *Hayākil al-nūr.* Edited by Tosun Bayrak. Louisville: Fons Vitae, 2006.

Alexanderin, Elizabeth R. 'The Sciences of Intuition and the Riches of Inspiration, Najm al-Dīn Kubrā in Jāmī's Nafaḥāt al-uns'. In *Reason and Inspiration in Islam*, *Essays in Honour of Hermann Landolt*. Edited by Todd Lawson. London and New York: I.B. Tauris, 2005.

Anjum, Ovamir. 'Mystical Authority and Governmentality in Medieval Islam'. In *Sufism and Society: Arrangements of the Mystical in the Muslim World, 1200-1800.* Edited by John J. Curry and Erik S. Ohlander. London and New York: Routledge, 2012.

Avery, Kenneth. The Psychology of the *Samāʻ: Listening and Altered States.* New York and London: Routledge, 2004.

Ballanfat, Paul. 'Reality and Image in the *Tafsīr* of Kubrā and Rāzī'. *Muhyiddin Ibn 'Arabī Society* 35 (2004).

Barthold, Vasily V. *Turkestan Down to the Mongol Invasion.* London: Luzac, 1968.

Bashir, Shahzad. 'Narrating Sight: Dreaming as Visual Training in Persianate Sufi Hagiography'. In *Dreams and Visions in Islamic Societies.* Edited by Ozgen Felek and Alexander D. Knysh. Albany: SUNY, 2012.

Bashir, Shahzad. *Messianic Hopes and Mystic Visions: The Nūrbakhshiyya between Medieval and Modern Islam.* Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2003.

Black, Deborah L. 'Mental Existence in Thomas Aquinas and Avicenna'. *Mediaeval Studies* 61 (1999): 45-79.

Black, Deborah L. 'Psychology: Soul and Intellect'. In *The Cambridge Companion to Arabic Philosophy.* Edited by Peter Adamson and Richard C. Taylor. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005.

Bosworth, Clifford E and Sevim A. 'The Seljuqs and The Khwarazm Shahs'. *History of Civilization of Central Asia* 4: 150-181.

Browne, Edward G. *A Literary History of Persia: From Firdawsī to Saʻdī,* Volumes 1-3. London: T. Fisher Urwin, 1906.

Brown, Jonathan. 'The Last Days of al-Ghazzali and the Tripartite Division of the Sufi World'. *The Muslim World* 96 (2006): 89-113.

Bulliet, Richard W. *The Patricians of Nishapur: A Study in Medieval Islamic History.* Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1972.

Chamberlain, Michael. *Knowledge and Practice in Medieval Damascus, 1190-1350.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994.

Chittick, William C. 'The Pertinence of Islamic Cosmology, Reflections on the Philosophy of Afḍal al-Dīn Kāshānī'. In *Reason and Inspiration in Islam, Essays in Honour of Hermann Landolt*. Edited by Todd Lawson. London and New York: I.B. Tauris, 2005.

Corbin, Henry. *Avicenna and the Visionary Recital.* London: Routledge, 1961.

Corbin, Henry. *The Man of Light in Iranian Sufism.* Translated by Nancy Pearson. London: Shambhala Publications, 1978.

Danishpazuh, Mohammed T. *Khirqa Hazārmīkhī.* Edited by. In *Collected Papers on Islamic Philosophy and Mysticism.* Edited by Mehdi Mohaghegh and Hermann Landolt. Tehran: Tehran University Press, 1971.

De Brujin, J.T.P. 'The Qalandariyyāt in Persian Mystical Poetry, from Sanā'ī Onwards'. In *The Heritage of Sufism: The Legacy of Medieval Persian Sufism (1150-1500),* volume 2. Edited by Leonard Lewisohn. Oxford: Oneworld, 1999.

De Brujin, J.T.P. *Persian Sufi Poetry: An Introduction to the Mystical Use of Classical Poems.* Richmond, Surrey: Curzon, 1997.

Deweese, Devin. 'Intercessory Claims of Sufi Communities during the 14th and 15th Centuries: "Messianic" Legitimising Strategies on the Spectrum of Normativity'. In *Unity in Diversity: Mysticism, MEssianism and the Construction of Religious authority in Islam.* Leiden: Brill, 2013.

Deweese, Devin. 'Khojagani Origins and the Critique of Sufism: The Rehtoric of Communal Uniqueness in the *Manaqib* of Khoja 'Ali 'Azizan Ramitani'. In *Islamic Mysticism Contested: Thirteen Centuries of Controversies and Polemics*. Edited by Bernd Radtke and Frederick De Jong. Leiden: Brill, 1999.

Deweese, Devin. ‘The Eclipse of the Kubrawiyya: Sayyid ‘Ali Hamadānī and Kubrawī Hagiographical traditions’. In *Studies on Sufism in Central Asia.* Edited by Devin Deweese. Farnham: Routledge, 2012.

Deweese, Devin. ‘Two Narratives on Najm al-Dīn Kubrā and Raḍī al-Dīn ʿAlī Lālā from a Thirteenth-Century Source, Notes on a Manuscript in the Raza Library, Rampur’. In *Reason and Inspiration in Islam*, *Essays in Honour of Hermann Landolt*. Edited by Todd Lawson. London and New York: I.B. Tauris, 2005.

Deweese, Devin. ‘Sayyid ‘Alī Hamdānī and Kubrawī Hagiographical Traditions’. In *The Heritage of Sufism: The Legacy of Medieval Persian Sufism (1150-1500),* volume 2. Edited by Leonard Lewisohn. Oxford: Oneworld, 1999.

Dols, Michael W. *Majnūn: The Madman in Medieval Society.* Oxford: Clarendon, 1992.

Druart, Therese-Anne. ‘Soul V. Body in Arabic Philosophy’. In *Soul and Body in Husserlian Phenomenology: Man and Nature.* Edited by Anna-Teresa Tymieniecka. Dordrecht: D. Reidel, 1983.

Elias, Jamal J. ‘Ṣūfī *tafsīr* Reconsidered: Exploring the Development of a Genre.’ *Qur’anic Studies* 12 (2010): 41-55.

Elias, Jamal J. *The Throne Carrier of God: The Life and Thought of ‘Alā’ al-Dawla al-Simnānī.* Albany: SUNY, 1995.

Elias, Jamal J. ‘The Sufi Lords of Bahrabad: Sa‘d al-Dīn and Ṣadr al-Dīn Hamuwayi’. *Iranian Studies* 27 (1994): 53-75.

Elias, Jamal J. ‘The Sufi Robe (khirqa) as a Vehicle of Spiritual Authority’. In *Robes and Honour: The Medieval World of Inbestiture.* Edited by Stewart Gordon. Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2000.

Ephrat, Daphna. *Spiritual Wayfarers, Leaders in Piety: Sufis and the Dissemination of Islam in Medieval Palestine.* Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2008.

Ernst, Carl. *Rūzbihān al-Baqlī:* Mysticism and the Rhetoric of Sainthood in Persian Sufism. Richmond, Surrey: Curzon Press, 1996.

Ernst, Carl. *Words of Ecstasy in Sufism.* Albany: SUNY, 1985.

Fahd, Toufy. 'The Dream in Medieval Islamic Society'. In *The Dream and Human Societies.* Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1966.

Fakhry, Majid. *Ethical Theories in Islam.* Leiden: Brill, 1991.

Farah, Caesar E. 'Rules Governing the Shaykh-Murīd Conduct'. *Numen* 21 (1974): 81-96.

Gianotti, Timothy J. *Al-Ghazālī's Unspeakable Doctrine of the Soul: Unveiling the Esoteric Psychology and Eschatology of the Iḥyā'.* Leiden: Brill, 2001.

Graham, Terry. 'Abū Sa'īd Ibn Abī'l-Khayr and the School of Khurasan'. In *Classical Persian Sufism from its Origins to Rumi.* Edited by Leonard Lewisohn. London: Khaniqahi Nimatullahi Publications, 1993.

Green, Nile. 'The Religious and Cultural Roles of Dreams and Visions in Islam'. *Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Northern Ireland* 13 (2003): 287-313.

Grunebaum, Gustave E. 'The Cultural Function of the Dream as Illustrated by Classical Islam'. In *The Dream and Human Societies.* Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1966.

Hamid Algar. *The Path of God's Bondsmen: From Origin to Return.* Delmar, New York: Caravan, 1982.

Haqqi, Anwarul Haque. *Chingiz Khan: The Life and Legacy of an Empire Builder.* Delhi: Primus Books, 2010.

Heer, Nicholas. 'Al-Rāzī and al-Ṭūsī on Ibn Sinā's Theory of Emanation'. In *Neoplatonism and Islamic Thought.* Edited by Parviz Morewedge. Albany: SUNY, 1992.

Hesse, Dag Nikolaus. *Avicenna's De Anima in the Latin West: A Peripatetic Philosophy of the Soul 1160-1300.* London: The Warburg Institute, 2000.

Hogson, Marshall G. S. *The Venture of Islam,* volume 2. London: Chicago University Press, 1974.

Hughes, Aaron W. *The Texture of the Divine.* Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2004.

Isfarā'inī, Nūr al-Dīn 'Abd al-Raḥmān. *Kāshif al-asrār.* Edited by Hermann Landolt. Tehran: Tehran University Press, 1980.

Izutsu, Toshihiko. 'The Theophanic Ego in Sufism: An Analysis of the Sufi Psychology of Najm ad-Dīn Kubrā'. *Sophia Perennis* 4 (1978): 23-42.

Kalin, Ibrahim. 'Knowledge as The Unity of the Intellect and the Object of Intellection in Islamic Philosophy: A Historical Survey from Plato to Mulla Sadra'. *Vincit Omnia* 3 (2000): 162-180.

Karamustafa, Ahmet T. 'Antinomian Sufis'. In *The Cambridge Companion to Sufism.* Edited by Lloyd Ridgeon. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014.

Karamustafa, Ahmet T. *Sufism: The Formative Period.* Edinbrugh: Edinbrugh University Press, 2007.

Karamustafa, Ahmet T. 'The Ghazālī Brothers and their Institutions'. *Tarih Incelem Arastirma Dzisi 75* (2015): 265-275.

Karamustafa, Ahmet T. *God's Unruly Friends.* Utah: University of Utah Press, 1994.

Katz, Jonathon G. 'Dreams and Their Interpretation in Sufi Thought and Practice'. In *Dreams and Visions in Islamic Societies.* Edited by Ozgen Felek and Alexander D. Knysh. Albany: SUNY, 2012.

Kemal, Salim. *The Philosophical Poetics of al-Farābī, Avicenna and Averroes: The Aristotelian Reception.* London: Routledge, 2003.

Knysh, Alexander. 'Sufism as an Explanatory Paradigm: 'The Issue of the Motivations of Sufi Resistance Movements in Western and Russian Scholarship'. *Die Welt des Islams* 42 (2002): 139-173.

Kubrā, Najm al-Dīn. *Al-Uṣūl al-'Ashra.* Translated by Ali Zargar. In 'The Ten Principles: Theoretical Implications of Volitional Death in Najm al-Dīn Kubrā's al-Uṣūl al-'Ashra (A Study and Translation)'. *The Muslim World* 103 (2013): 107-130.

Kubrā, Najm al-Dīn. *Fawā'iḥ al-jamāl wa-fawātiḥ al-Jalāl.* Edited by Youssef Zeidan. Kuwait: Dār Sa'ād al-Ṣabāḥ, 1993.

Kubrā, Najm al-Dīn. *Khirqa Hazārmīkhī.* Edited by Danishpazuh. In *Collected Papers on Islamic Philosophy and Mysticism.* Edited by Mehdi Mohaghegh and Hermann Landolt. Tehran: Tehran University Press, 1971.

Lambton, Ann. 'Awqāf in Persia: 6th-8th/12th-14th Centuries'. *Islamic Law and Society* 4 (1997): 298-318

Landolt, Hermann."Aṭṭār, Sufism and Ismailism'. In *'Aṭṭār and the Persian Sufi Tradition: The Art of Spiritual Flight.* Edited by Leonard Lewisohn and Christopher Shackle. London and New York: I.B. Tauris, 2006.

Landolt, Hermann. *Kāshif al-asrār.* Tehran: Tehran University Press, 1980.

Landolt, Hermann. 'Simnānī on Waḥdat al-Wujūd'. In *Collected Papers on Islamic Philosophy and Mysticism.* Edited by Mehdi Mohaghegh and Hermann Landolt. Tehran: Tehran University Press, 1971.

Landolt, Hermann. 'Stages of God Cognition and the Praise of Folly According to Najm al-Dīn-i Rāzī'. *Sufi* 47 (2000): 301-326.

Lewisohn, Leonard. 'Iranian Islam and Persianate Sufism'. In *The Heritage of Sufism: The Legacy of Medieval Persian Sufism (1150-1500),* volume 2. Edited by Leonard Lewisohn. Oxford: Oneworld, 1999.

Lewisohn, Leonard. 'Sufi Symbolism in the Persian Hermeneutical Tradition: Reconstructing the Pagoda of 'Aṭṭār's Esoteric Poetics'. In *'Aṭṭār and the Persian Sufi Tradition: The Art of Spiritual Flight.* Edited by Leonard Lewisohn and Christopher Shackle. London and New York: I.B. Tauris, 2006.

Lewisohn, Leonard. *The Spiritual Journey in Kubrawī Sufism*. In *Reason and Inspiration in Islam*, *Essays in Honour of Hermann Landolt.* Edited by Todd Lawson. London and New York: I.B. Tauris, 2005.

Makdisi. *The Rise of Colleges: Institutions of Learning in Islam and the West.* Edinbrugh: Edinbrugh University Press, 1981.

Malamud, Margaret. 'Gender and Spiritual Self Fashioning: The Master-Disciple Relationship in Classical Sufism'. *The American Academy of Religion* 64 (1996): 89-117.

Malamud, Margaret. 'Sufi Organizations and Structures of Authority in Medieval Nishapur'. *Middle East Studies* 26 (1994): 427-442.

Martin, David. 'The Return to "The One" in the Philosophy of Najm al-Dīn al-Kubrā'. In *Neoplatonism and Islamic Thought.* Edited by Parviz Morewedge. Albany: SUNY, 1992.

Mayer, Toby. 'Yogic-Sufi Homologies: The Case of the *Six Principles* Yoga of Nāropa and the Kubrawiyya. *Muslim World* 100 (2010): 268-286.

McGinnis, Jon. *Avicenna.* Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2010.

Melchert, Christopher. 'Sufis and Competing Movements in Nishapur'. *Iran* 39 (2001): 237-247.

Meier, Fritz. *Die Fawā'iḥ al-Gamāl wa-Fawātiḥ al-Galāl.* Wiesbaden: Steiner, 1957.

Meier, Fritz. 'A Book of Etiquette for Sufis'. In *Essays on Islamic Piety and Mysticism.* Edited by Ulrich Haarmann and Wadad Kadi. Translated by John O'Kane. Leiden and Boston: Brill, 1999.

Meier, Fritz. 'An Exchange of Letters between Sharaf al-Dīn al-Balkhī and Majd al-Dīn al-Baghdādī'. In *Essays on Islamic Piety and Mysticism.* Edited by Ulrich Haarmann and Wadad Kadi. Translated by John O'Kane. Leiden and Boston: Brill, 1999.

Meier, Fritz. 'The Dervish Dance: An Attempt at an Overview'. In *Essays on Islamic Piety and Mysticism.* Edited by Ulrich Haarmann and Wadad Kadi. Translated by John O'Kane. Leiden and Boston: Brill, 1999.

Miller, Isabel. 'Occult Science and the Fall of the Khwārazm-Shah Jalāl al-Dīn'. *Iran* 39 (2001): 249-256.

Mojaddedi, Jawad A. 'Getting Drunk with Abū Yazīd or Staying Sober with Junayd: The Creation of a Popular Theology of Sufism'. *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 66 (2003): 1-13.

Mottahedeh Roy P. *Loyalty and Leadership in Early Islamic Society.* London: I.B. Tauris, 2001.

Nizāmu al-Dīn, Muḥammad. *Introduction to the Jawāmi' al-ḥikāyāt wa lawāmi' al-ruwāyāt of Sadīd al-Dīn Muḥammad al-'Awfī.* London: Luzac, 1929.

Ohlander, Erik S. 'Behind the Veil of the Unseen: Dreams and Dreaming in Classical and Medieval Sufi Tradition'. In *Dreams and Visions in Islamic Societies.* Edited by Ozgen Felek and Alexander D. Knysh. Albany: SUNY, 2012.

Ohlander, Erik S. *Sufism in an Age of Transition: 'Umar al-Suhrawardī and the Rise of Mystical Brotherhoods.* Boston: Brill, 2008.

Ohlander, Erik S. 'Inner-Worldly Religiosity, Social Structuring and Fraternal Incorporation in a Time of Uncertainty: The *Futuwwat-nāma* of Najm al-Dīn Zarkūb of Tabriz'. *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 40 (2013): 14-35.

Orrin, Morgan D. *Medieval Persia 1040-1797.* London: Longman, 1988.

Ridgeon, Lloyd. '*Azīz Nasafī*. Richmond, Surrey: Curzon, 1998.

Ridgeon, Lloyd. *Jawanmardī: A Sufi Code of Honour*. Einbrugh: Edinbrugh University Press, 2011.

Ridgeon, Lloyd. *Morals and Mysticism in Persian Sufism: A History of Sufi-Futuwwat in Iran.* New York: Routledge, 2010.

Ridgeon, Lloyd. *Persian Metaphysics and Mysticism: Selected Trastises of 'Azīz Nasafī.* Richmond, Surrey: Curzon, 2002.

Ritter, Helmut. *The Ocean of the Soul: Man, the World and God in the Stories of Farīd al-Dīn al-'Aṭṭār*. Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2003.

Safi, Omid. The Politics of Knowledge in Premodern Islam: Negotiating Ideology and Religious Inquiry. London: University of North Carolina Press, 2006.

Salamah-Qudsi, Arin S. 'Crossing the Desert: *Siyāḥa* and *Safar* as Key Concepts in Early Sufi Literature and Life. *Sufi Studies* 2 (2013): 129-147.

Salamah-Qudsi, Arin S. 'The Everlasting Sufi: Achieving the Final Destination of the Path In the Sufi Teachings of 'Umar al-Suhrawardī (d. 632/1234)'. *Islamic Studies* 22 (2011): 313-338.

Salamah-Qudsi, Arin S. 'The idea of *Tashabbuh* In Sufi Communities and Literature of the Late 6th/12th and early 7th/13th Century in Baghdad'. *Al-Qantara* 32 (2011): 175-197.

Salamah-Qudsi, Arin S. 'Institutionalised Mashyakha In the Twelfth Century Sufism of 'Umar al-Suhrawardī'. *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 36 (2009): 381-425.

Salamah-Qudsi, Arin S. 'The Will to be Unveiled: Sufi Autobiographies in Classical Sufism'. *Al-Masaq Journal of the Medieval Mediterranean* 24 (2012): 199-207.

Schimmel, Annemarie. *Mystical Dimensions of Islam.* Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1975.

Shihadeh, Ayman. 'Classical Ash'arī Anthropology: Body, Life and Spirit'. *The Muslim World* 102 (2012): 433-477.

Silvers-Allario, Laury.' The Teaching Relationship in Early Sufism: A Reassessment of Fritz Meier's Definition of the *Shaykh al-tarbiya* and the *shaykh al-ta'līm'. The Muslim world* 93 (2003): 69-97.

Shpall, William. 'A Note on Najm al-Dīn al-Rāzī And the *Baḥr al-ḥaqā'iq. Folia Orientalia* 22 (1981): 69-80.

Sirriyeh, Elizabeth. *Dreams and Visions in the World of Islam: A History of Muslim Dreaming and Foreknowing.* London: Tauris Academic Studies, 2015.

Sourdel, Dominique. 'Robes of Honour in 'Abbasid Baghdad During the Eighth to Eleventh Centuries'. In *Robes and Honour: The Medieval World of Inbestiture.* Edited by Stewart Gordon. Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2000.

Strouma, Sarah and Sviri, Sara. 'The Beginnings of Mystical Philosophy in al-Andalus: Ibn Maṣarra and his *Epistle on Contemplation'. Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 36 (2009): 201-253.

Stillman, Yedida K. *Arab Dress: A Short History From the Dawn of Islam to Modern Times.* Leiden: Brill, 2000.

Todd, Richard. *The Sufi Doctrine of Man: Ṣadr al-Dīn al-Qūnawī's Metaphysical Anthropology.* Leiden: Brill, 2014.

Treiger, Alexander. *Inspired Knowledge in Islamic Thought*: *Al-Ghazālī's Theory of Mystical Cognition and its Avicennan Foundation*. Abingdon and New York: Routledge, 2012.

Trimingham, Spencer J. *The Sufi Orders in Islam*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971.

Ul-Huda, Qamar. *Striving for Divine union: Spiritual Excercises for Suhrawardī Sufis.* London: Routledge, 2002.

Waley, Muhammad Isa. 'The Kubrawiyya: Najm al-Dīn Kubrā and the Central Asian School of Sufism'. In *Islamic Spirituality: Manifestations.* Edited by Seyyed Hossein Nasr. London: SCM Press, 1991.

Wolfson, Harry A. *The Philosophy of the Kalām.* Cambridge, Mass. and London: Harvard University Press, 1976.

Zargar, Ali. 'The Ten Principles: Theoretical Implications of Volitional Death in Najm al-Dīn Kubrā's al-Uṣūl al-'Ashra (A Study and Translation)'. *The Muslim World* 103 (2013): 107-130.